P. P. 377. aa.

THE Independent Whig.

Rich. Bingham

Nec ullum satis validum Imperium erat coercendis Seditionibus Populi, flagitia Hominum ut Ceremonias Deûm protegentis. TACIT.

The SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
Printed for J. PEELE, at *Locke's Head*, in *Pater-noster-Row*. M,DCC,XXII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE LOWER HOUSE OF *CONVOCATION.*

YOU, Gentlemen, who are the Representatives of the Clergy of *England*, are proper Patrons of a Work, which treats of Religion and the Clergy. It is written to promote Liberty, Virtue and

Piety; the Intereſts of which, I hope, you will always eſpouſe, and eſteem as your own; and will conſequently approve my Deſign, and give me your Thanks, whatever may have been the Succeſs of my Endeavours.

The many wild and unſcriptural Claims ſtarted, and impetuouſly maintain'd, by very many of thoſe you repreſent (and I wiſh I could ſay denied, though but faintly, by any conſiderable Number of others) gave Occaſion to the following Sheets; and, having in them ſhewn to my Brethren, the Laity, the Abſurdity and Impiety of thoſe Claims, by Arguments fetch'd from Reaſon, the Goſpel, and the Laws of our Country; I ſhall, in this Addreſs to your ſelves, endeavour to convince you, that it is your Intereſt to drop them; and if I can ſucceed in this Point, I preſume, all other Arguments may be uſeleſs. Theſe

Theſe Gentlemen, in the Heat of their Demands and Contention for Power, have gone ſo far towards *Rome*, and borrowed ſo many of her Principles, that I ſee no other Medium left for them, but either to proceed on in their Journey thither, (which, as they have manag'd Matters, is now a very ſhort one) or to turn back to the Principles of the Reformation (a very long Journey, I confeſs!) and accept of the Biſhop of *Bangor*'s Scheme, as much as they hate it and him. That Scheme, tho' it may not be altogether ſo toothſome, yet is a ſafe Scheme: And tho' it does not entitle them to all the Power and Wealth of *England*, yet it ſecures to them what they have.

Conſider, Gentlemen, that you cannot take as much of Popery as you pleaſe, and leave the reſt. *Machiavel* has long ſince told us, that no Govern-

ment can ſubſiſt long but upon its original Foundation, and by recurring often to the Principles upon which it was firſt founded. It will indeed ſtand upon no other; and when that is ſap'd and undermined, the Superſtructure muſt fall to the Ground, and the old Inhabitants find out new Materials, and erect new Buildings upon other Foundations; and they are, for the moſt part, undone by the Experiment.

The firſt Principles of our Proteſtant Church, are the Principles of the Reformation; namely, the ſpiritual Supremacy of the Crown; the Right of the Laity to judge for themſelves; the forming of all Eccleſiaſtical Polity by the Legiſlature; and conſequently, that of creating Clergymen by the Civil Power, forgot by too many of the Clergy, and remembred againſt their Wills by the Laity. Whoever would main-

maintain the Reformation, muſt maintain theſe Principles; or embrace Popery, if he deſerts them. Whether the ſolemn Oaths of the Clergy in general, have been ſufficient Pledges and Motives for their believing and defending them, I appeal to their Behaviour and their Writings.

Being the ſworn Servants of the Law, many of them have avowedly contradicted and bid Defiance to the Law: Being entruſted with ſerving and inſtructing the People, they have deceiv'd and ſet up for commanding the People: Being choſen by the Crown to miniſterial Offices, they have claimed a Power above the Crown; from which they acknowledge, upon Oath, to have received all Power. They have done what in them lay, to make the Mercy of God of none Effect, by damning whom they pleas'd; and to diſarm his

Juſtice, by pardoning whom they would. They have made *Heaven it ſelf to wait for the Sentence from the Prieſt's Mouth*, and *God himſelf to follow the Judgment of the Prieſt*. They have pretended *to oblige God Almighty to open and ſhut Heaven's Gates*. They have aſſerted, that *the Prieſthood is a Princely Power, greater and more venerable than that of the Emperor*: That *the ſpiritual Government* (that is, a Government by Prieſts) *is farther above the Civil Power, than Heaven is above the Earth*: That *a Biſhop is to be honour'd as God*: That 'the Revenue of Prieſts 'ought to be greater than the Revenue 'of Kings: That greater Puniſhment 'is due to an Offence againſt a Prieſt, 'than to an Offence againſt a King: 'That Kings and Queens are to bow 'down before the Prieſt, with their Face 'towards the Earth, and to lick up the 'Duſt of his Feet: That it is the

'Royal

'Royal Office of Kings and Queens, to 'carry the Prieſt in their Boſom, or on 'their Shoulders: That great Men 'ought not to ſay *my Chaplain*, in any 'other Senſe than we ſay, MY KING, 'or MY GOD.

As to the King's Nomination of Biſhops, and the Power he has over the Convocation, they have maintain'd that 'the Church ſhould as reaſonably have 'the Nomination and depoſing of Kings; 'and that it is as reaſonable that the 'Parliament ſhould neither meet nor 'act without the Biſhop's Licenſe and 'Authority: That the Chief Magiſtrate 'is bound to ſubmit to the Biſhop, who 'may excommunicate him: That it is a 'Contradiction and an Impoſſibility, for 'any State to have Authority over the 'Church, that is, over the Prieſts: That 'the Prieſts Power extends to the ſettling 'of Faſting, and Feaſting, and Clothes:

'That

'That thoſe Clergy, who comply with 'the Government, and yet retain their 'old Principles, are the beſt Part, and 'moſt numerous of the Clergy;' that is, that thoſe of the Clergy, who are perjur'd, are the beſt and moſt numerous. They have decreed, that *to maintain that the Sovereignty of* England *is in the Three Eſtates of* England, namely, in King, Lords, and Commons, *is a damnable Principle.* They have aſſerted, that the *Lords and Commons have no more Share in the making of Laws, than a Beggar has in one's Alms: That all Subjects are Slaves as to Life and Property:* 'And that Reſiſtance is not lawful for 'the Maintenance of the Liberties of our 'ſelves and others; nor for the Defence 'of Religion; nor for the Preſervation 'of Church and State; nor for the Sal-'vation of a Soul; no, nor for the Re-'demption of the whole World.'

There

There is a choice Catalogue of these extravagant Doctrines, collected in a a Pamphlet publish'd some Years since, and entitl'd, *A new Catechism, with Dr.* Hickes's *39 Articles*; and all of them taken out of the Writings of Men in the highest Reputation amongst you. Yes, Gentlemen, all these impious, mad and selfish Doctrines have been maintain'd by those of your Order, and never yet contradicted by any publick Act of your Body. On the contrary, with your usual Charity and good Nature, you have fallen upon those who expos'd them; tho' they were evidently the very Corner-Stones of Popery, and a flat Contradiction to the whole Spirit and Progress of the Reformation.

There is no Medium between Popery and the Reformation; that is, between the claiming of any Power in Religion, and the renouncing of all Power

Power in Religion: (as you will find fully made out in the following Sheets:) The latter is the Characteriſtick of a Proteſtant Miniſter, and the former the black Mark of a Popiſh Prieſt; and you have it in your Choice, Gentlemen, which you will chuſe to reſemble.

If you do not think fit to accept the *Biſhop* of *Bangor*'s *Proteſtant* Scheme, which is the ſame with that of the Reformation, and has been ever ſince the Law of the Land, there is but one Choice left you, namely, that of working about a Popiſh Revolution, *per fas & nefas*; and of bringing undiſguis'd Popery and the Inquiſition into the Church, and direct Slavery upon your Country; and upon your ſelves, the Neceſſity of throwing your ſelves blindly upon the Mercy of the Court of *Rome*, for her Protection, and Licence

to

to preſerve your Dignities and Revenues.

You have no Poſſibility of keeping clear of the *Pope* and the *Regale* both. The King will not part with his Prerogative; the Parliament will not give up its Authority; nor will the People entirely part with their Senſes. And for the Biſhop of *Rome*, you would do well to remember what tender Uſage your Predeceſſors received at his Hands. He indeed always diſcountenanc'd and oppreſs'd them. The lazy Monks, and debauch'd Fryars, were his Darlings, and peculiar Care. They were thoroughly detach'd from the Intereſts of the Laity, and thorough Dependents upon the Holy Father: They were therefore diſtinguiſh'd as his Spiritual Janizaries, and the Guards of the Papacy; and to them he gave away the Revenues and Maintenance of the

Secular

Secular Clergy, not ſo much truſted by him.

If you remember this, you will eaſily judge how much more it is your Intereſt to ſubmit to the eaſy and gentle Authority of the Prince, and to live under the Protection of the Laws of your Country, by which your Income and all your Immunities are aſcertained and ſecur'd to you, than to live expos'd to the Diſtruſts of a foreign cruel Court, and to the Rapine of foreign and needy Prieſts, who will be perpetually quarter'd upon you, and drawing Money from you; and when probably it will grow a Maxim in the *Roman Politicks*, that *you muſt be kept poor.*

But beſides, however good the Intentions may be of ſuch amongſt your ſelves, or of thoſe you repreſent, to become the Subjects, or, as you may vainly

vainly imagine, the Confederates of *Rome*; they will, in all Likelihood, find it utterly impoſſible to execute their Deſigns; and muſt, in all Appearance, venture their preſent Poſſeſſions upon the Succeſs of ſuch Deſigns. And if they ſhould happen to ſucceed, they may have the Glory indeed of the Wickedneſs; but the Rewards will be, for the moſt Part, reap'd by new Comers, who had no Share in the Toil. Foreign Eccleſiaſticks will be the firſt in Favour, and the higheſt in Place: They will carry off your Honours and your Preferments: The Sincerity of your Converſation will be queſtion'd, or pretended to be queſtion'd: There will quickly grow a Diſtinction between *Old Papiſts* and *New Converts*; as in *Spain* and *Portugal*, where a wide Difference is made between old Chriſtians and new; which Difference holds for many Generations: and, in ſhort, all Countenance

tenance will be ſhewn, all Favours will be granted, to thoſe who never bow'd their Heads to *Baal*. Your Behaviour to the late King *James* will alſo be remember'd, tho' you have forgot his to you; and you will be call'd *Ingrates*, *New Hypocrites*, or *Old Rebels*.

I am in Hopes, Reverend Sirs, that from all theſe Conſiderations, the Gentlemen of theſe Notions will find Reaſon to look back to their Original at the Reformation, and to preach up the Principles upon which it ſtands, ſince they are like to ſtand or fall by theſe Principles. Let them veer about once more; they know how to do it; and I will be the firſt to declare that they have been once in the Right, and once reconcil'd their Views to the Liberties of *England*.

I might likewiſe fetch an Argument from their awkwardneſs in Politicks, to convince them that they ought to be Proteſtants. They have made it manifeſt, by many Trials and long Experience, that they are but heavy Intriguers, and ſadly want both the Temper and Talents of Politicians. The Proteſtant Religion being a plain one, ſupported by obvious Truth and common Senſe, and requiring no Managements or Fineneſs to make it go down with the People, would fit them well enough, if they could be content with it. But it is quite otherwiſe with the Religion of *Rome*; which, being a ſurprizing Medly of various and contradictory Parts, requires the utmoſt Addreſs, Delicacy and Skill to keep them from falling to pieces: And, in this Reſpect, the Church of *Rome* owes its Figure and Preſervation to the Court of *Rome*, where all the niceſt Secrets of

Power are underſtood, and all the moſt curious Arts in Politicks are practis'd; where every Abſurdity is finely diſguis'd, and every Cruelty is artfully conceal'd; where, in fine, they have the Knack of making People pleas'd with being abus'd, and to forget that they are Slaves, or never to know it.

Hitherto, Gentlemen, it has been otherwiſe with you: Our Pretenders have but groſsly ape'd Popery: Their Aims have been too open, and their Management too coarſe. A blunt Demand at once for all the Wealth, and Reverence, and Power of *England*, was ſo ridiculous, that, had we not before known their unhappy State of Ignorance, we ſhould have thought they had been in Jeſt when they made it. Nor has that incurable Appetite of theirs, which they cannot hide, of combating Conſcience with down-right Force, and bru-

tiſh Violence, done them leſs Harm. In ſhort, good Counſel they have ſeldom taken; their fooliſh Counſels they never could conceal; and, God be thank'd, their wicked Counſels they never yet have been able, thoroughly, to execute; they, are in truth, but doggerel Politicians. *Engliſh Prieſtcraft* is as coarſe as the *Romiſh Prieſtcraft* is fine. *Theirs is the Depths of Satan, and* OURS *his Shallows*; as is excellently ſaid by the late Mr. *Samuel Johnſon*.

The *Romiſh* Clergy choſe the Days of Darkneſs to ſow their Frauds in: They vended their holy Trifles, when Ignorance had increas'd the Number of Buyers; They planted their Power in the fertile Soil of Superſtition; and by keeping the People poor, wretched, ignorant, wicked, and fearful, as they every where do, they ſtill maintain their Dominion.

But our High Gentlemen, who both know and lament, that this Nation has ſeen more Days of Light and Liberty (which indeed are ſeldom ſeparated) ſince the *Revolution*, than ever it ſaw before, have yet prepoſterouſly choſen that very Time of Light and Liberty to advance all the wildeſt Claims of Popery, and all the vileſt Tenets of Slavery. What could they mean? Did they not know, that the more Men find the Uſe of their Underſtanding, the more loth they are to part with it? And that thoſe Men who are willing to part with their Underſtandings, muſt have very ſhallow ones?

The *Engliſh* Laity have been us'd pretty much of late, to think for themſelves; and we find, as doubtleſs, Gentlemen, you do, that the more Men know of Church Power, the leſs they like it. They ſee that Prieſtly Pomp

always ſtands on Lay Miſery; that where the Prieſts are Princes, the People are the loweſt Slaves; and that Church Power always riſes with the Fall of Liberty and Knowledge.

The Popiſh Prieſts too, as they propagated their lying Tenets in the dark, ſo they did it ſlily, and by well weigh'd Gradations. Every Invention of theirs had its proper Seaſon. The *Fire of Purgatory* was kindled at one time; *Indulgences* were hatch'd at another; Tranſubſtantiation ſtole in at a convenient Hour; and all their Doctrines of Gain and Power, were broach'd at politick Diſtances, and as Opportunities invited.

But our High Prieſts, as they have obſerv'd neither Meaſure nor Mercy in their Demands upon us; ſo neither have they made them at due and

discreet Intervals. By over-loading the Cart, they have overturn'd it. They have frighten'd us with the broad and black Cloud of their Pretensions, and made Men unanimously oppose that Heap of Claims and Absurdities, which, had they been wise, we might have been brought to swallow singly. They wanted Patience, as well as Policy.

We were not yet ripe for Popery. We had Judgment enough to see that all those Claims, all those new Doctrines, evidently and solely tended to the Clergy's Advantage, and our Undoing: And we thought it was as consistent with natural Equity and common Sense, that we should be Judges in our own Case, as that you should be in yours. Indeed, if any amongst you had maintain'd Doctrines evidently grievous to your selves, and manifestly tending to the Knowledge and external Happiness of the People,

People, we ſhould at leaſt have thought you in Earneſt. If, for Example, you had contended, that the Prieſts ſhould faſt Three Days in the Week, and the Laity only when they pleas'd; that the Prieſts ſhould be entirely at the Mercy of the People for a Maintenance; and ſhou'd be reſtrain'd from taking above Thirty or Forty Pounds a Year Sallary; and forbid all Pomp and Affluence, becauſe they vitiate the Mind, and breed Pride and Lazineſs, two Faults heinous in a Miniſter of God: I ſay, if you had contended for ſuch Liberty in the Laity, and for ſuch rigorous Reſtraints upon your ſelves, it wou'd have carried in it the Face of Sincerity and Self-Denial. But, for Prieſts, who are known to have been, at firſt, the Alms-men of the People, (and who moſtly are ſtill educated by the Charity, and maintain'd by the Benevolence of the Laity) to talk of Palaces, Revenues, nay Thrones

and Principalities, and be for aſſuming Empire over their Maſters, and growing great by the Poverty of the People, is ſuch a ſtretch of Arrogance and Folly, as cannot be aggravated, as it would not be credible, did we not ſee it. The Pretenſions of the great *Turk* are not half ſo deteſtable.

Who would not rather be a Slave to a *Monarch*, than a *Monk*? The Oppreſſion of Temporal Tyrants never has been, and never can be ſo great as the Oppreſſion of Prieſts. Temporal Tyrants only make their Slaves as miſerable as *Laymen* can do. They take almoſt their All; but the little that is left, they leave them to uſe as they pleaſe: Whereas the Prieſt, where he has Power enough, exerciſes his Tyranny over the Bellies and Palates of his more miſerable Vaſſals, and ſuffers them to eat (if he leaves them any

Thing to eat) but what he pleaſes, and when he pleaſes.

In Truth, the Subjects of Prieſts, Abroad, are in a viler State than the Prieſts Black Cattle: They are worſe fed, and not more knowing.

Can you deny, Gentlemen, that the more Power the Prieſt poſſeſſes, juſt ſo much the more Men ſuffer in their Souls and Bodies? Nor can it be otherwiſe; Power produces Pride and Debauchery in the Clergy, and Vaſſallage begets Baſeneſs and Poverty in the People. Whatever is gain'd to the Clergy, is gain'd from the Laity; ſo that for them to be rich, we muſt be Beggars; and that they may be Lords, we muſt be Slaves. This I take to be ſelf-evident.

Will

Will you, or can you ſay, Gentlemen, that thoſe Claims are conducing to the Welfare of Mankind; which, where-ever they prevail, do effectually diveſt Mankind of every Thing that ſweetens human Life, and renders it deſirable, or indeed ſupportable? Is that Power for our Benefit, which diſarms us of our Faculties, cows our Minds with ſlaviſh Fears, and gives us up a Prey to thoſe Men, whoſe Strength lies in our Weakneſs, and whoſe Proſperity is owing to our Undoing? This is what it has always done, and what it does at this Day in *Spain*, *Italy*, and other Prieſt-ridden Countries: And this is what it would as effectually do in *England*, if *Engliſhmen* would ſuffer it.

Theſe Claims of yours, Gentlemen, have done you great Prejudice. They have made Men afraid of your Spirit, which

which ſeems to them to be mercileſs and inſatiable. So that, if you are begrudg'd what you have, you may thank your ſelves; it is owing to your claiming what you ought not to have. If a Clergymen enjoys the Tythes of Part of my Eſtate, by Virtue of the Law; and not content with that, would have Tythes of the Whole, in Spite of the Law; it is natural enough for me to think that the Man is a Knave, who would have no Man's Property ſecur'd by the Law but his own.

Nothing is more common with you than to call the Impropriations of the Abbey-Lands, by the dreadful Name of *Sacrilege*. You ſay, and ſome of you have ſaid it in Print, and many more in the Pulpit, that ſuch Impropriation was robbing the Church. What Church, Gentlemen? Was it not the Church of *Rome*? And are you of that Church?

Church? It is certain, that the *reformed Proteſtant* Church of *England* never poſſeſs'd any of theſe Lands. And how you, who are *Proteſtants*, and not Succeſſors to the *Monks*, can hold from the *Popiſh Monks*, by divine Right, Lands and Immunities, which theſe gluttonous and cheating Vermin acquir'd by diabolical Rogueries, is ſuch a Riddle as can only come from Eccleſiaſticks, but can never be ſolved by Laymen. Did you ever hear, Gentlemen, that the primitive Preachers of *Chriſt*, ſet up for being Heirs to the Riches and Revenues of the *Heathen Temples*, when they were deſerted or demoliſh'd? And, in my Opinion, theſe Pagan Revenues were more honeſtly got, as well as more innocently us'd, than the Lands and Income of the *Popiſh Monaſteries*.

Our

Our Gentlemen of this Caſt have long provok'd one Part of the World, and deceived the other, by their Cant of *Divine Right*; which, tho' a very Jeſt in it ſelf, and long ſince exploded, is a Title they clap to all their Poſſeſſions, let them come by them how they will. This is ſhameful Boldneſs. It is certain the Goſpel has not given you one Foot of Land, or one Shilling of Money; nor did ever God Almighty appear perſonally to do it by Word of Mouth. Your Church is a Creature of the Conſtitution, and you are the Creatures of the Law: And you moſt evidently belie Divine Right, if you pretend to derive from thence, what all the World ſees you owe to ſecular Bounty; I will not ſay to devout Frauds.

If you could be but perſwaded to reconcile your Principles and Pretenſi-

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ons to the Security and Happineſs of Mankind, all Mankind wou'd be reconcil'd to you and your Preteniſions. I do not remember to have ever heard the Clergy contemn'd, where they did not firſt deſerve Contempt. When any of them depart from the Meekneſs of Miniſters, no Body will pay them the Regard due to Miniſters; ſuch who intermeddle in every Thing, will be reſpected in nothing. Such who oppoſe every publick Good, and every Action favourable to Liberty, and beneficent to the World, will be deem'd Foes to Liberty, and to the World. Such who promote Strife and Perſecution, will be reckon'd Enemies to Peace and Charity; and thoſe who are at the Head of all publick Miſchiefs, will themſelves be thought a publick Miſchief. If they promote the known Principles, and endeavour to ſupport the known and main Pillars of Popery, can they

expect

expect to be treated as Proteſtants? If they promote Rebellion, and practice Perjury, can they either be accounted good Subjects or Chriſtians? And if they are the Patrons of Tyranny, and the Promoters of Immorality, what Quarter can they expect to find in a *Free Country*, or amongſt *Men of Virtue*?

If you ask me, *Why all this from a* Layman *to his* ghoſtly Guides? The Anſwer is ready — The Work was neceſſary; and, Gentlemen, thoſe of your Order made it neceſſary: The Intereſt of Truth and Liberty was concern'd; and, indeed, at Stake; by the conſtant Attacks of thoſe of your Robe upon them: which Attacks were ſo far from being diſavowed by you, that the wicked Authors of them were not only treated as the Chief Champions of the Church's Cauſe; but

but all who oppos'd them have been fallen upon with the ſterneſt Outrage, and the utmoſt Bitterneſs of Spirit; together with lying Calumnies, uncharitable Suggeſtions, and baſe and brutiſh Language; their uſual Weapons, Offenſive and Defenſive.

It is worth while to mention the great Want of Sincerity in the Conduct of ſuch Men on this Occaſion. Whenever they think it ſeaſonable in Converſation, to uphold the mad Principles of *Hickes*, and of the other Proteſtant Papiſts and Nonjurors, (tho', if ever there was ſuch a Thing as Blaſphemy in the World, it is to be met with in their Writings, in the moſt daring Colours) they never fail to ſhew themſelves their Advocates. But when they think that a Defence of theſe Reveries will do a Prejudice to the Cauſe, with thoſe of your People,

People, who have a Notion of Religion and the *Reformation*; or among Men, who, they know, can expoſe theſe Reveries: Then, Gentlemen, they either ſhameleſsly deny that theſe Writers maintain what they do maintain; or ſay, that the Clergy are not anſwerable for the Whimſies of particular Doctors.

Theſe diſhoneſt Shifts, theſe baſe Practices, compounded of Knavery and Lies, are common amongſt too many of your Order. Yes, Gentlemen, to the Diſgrace of common Candour, and the Reproach of Religion, they are very common amongſt the High Clergy. I my ſelf have frequently found them; and, I believe, every one, who has had any Converſation with them, has as frequently found them.

Now, that theſe Principles (ſeveral of which I have already laid together in this *Dedication*) are aſſerted in the Books of your Non-ſwearing and Forſwearing Brethren, I appeal to the Books themſelves: That they are impious, falſe, Antichriſtian, and Deſtructive of Human Society, of all Social Virtues, and all Social Happineſs, I appeal to common Senſe, and to the known State of thoſe miſerable Countries where they prevail: And, that they have been either adopted, or approv'd by all the High Clergy, I appeal to their many Quotations from them, and to their conſtantly oppoſing every Proceeding againſt them.

Gentlemen, it is of much Conſequence to you, to clear your ſelves from the Imputation of maintaining or adhering to ſuch ungodly, ſuch miſchievous Tenets: Tenets, which with-

without consulting the reveal'd Will of God, appear detestable to the common Light of Reason. Tenets, which abrogate the Justice and Mercy of God, and call his very Being in Question; and Tenets, which would for ever banish all Peace and Security from amongst Men, and from the Face of the Earth. Consider, that you cannot take one Step in asserting or countenancing them, without direct Perjury. You have, upon Oath, renounced *all Power, of any kind or sort whatsoever*, but what you receive from the *King* and the *Law*: Will you, after this solemn Appeal to God, by an Oath, sacred amongst *Barbarians* and *Infidels*, appeal to all the World that you are perjur'd, by maintaining, as too many do in their Writings and Sermons, that they have a Power, which they neither derive from the *King* nor the *Law*?

Sure it must be a melancholly Reflection to these Gentlemen, in Point of Credit and Reputation (for I say nothing of Conscience) that, whilst they thus distinguish themselves from *Low-Churchmen*, whose great Crime consists in not mocking God, and leaping over Conscience and Oaths; they do, at the same time, distinguish themselves from *Christianity* it self, which, above all other Religions, disclaims Power, and more than all other Religions abhors *Insincerity* and *false Swearing*.

Can you, Gentlemen, reconcile their Behaviour, since the *Revolution*, to the Understanding of the People, or to any Man's Conscience but their own? If the Doctrine of *Hereditary Right* is true, as many of them eternally and fiercely contend, how could they swear to Princes made by *Act of Parliament*? And if the Doctrine of Passive Obedience is

true,

true, how came they to ſwear to a Government founded upon open and evident Reſiſtance, and to be inſtrumental themſelves in that Reſiſtance? Their particular Behaviour to His preſent Majeſty, cannot yet be forgot. Be ſo good to let us know, what Security He found from their Oaths; or what Aſſiſtance the High Clergy gave Him againſt the late Rebellion, in purſuance of theſe Oaths? Can Men, who ſhew, by glaring Actions, that they value not their own Souls, do any Good to the Souls of other Men?

If you would clear your ſelves from the Imputation of ſupporting or favouring ſuch monſtrous Principles, you muſt do it openly and avowedly, in full and expreſs Words, free from that Equivocation which ſome of your Order are much ſuſpected of, upon the moſt ſolemn and ſacred Occaſions. You have

been ready enough to cenſure many good Books, and many worthy Propoſitions: Be ingenuous for this once, Gentlemen; expoſe the Blaſphemies of thoſe of your own Body, and brand the Authors of them with thoſe Names of Infamy which they deſerve, and which you never want whenever you think fit to *call Names*. And if you fairly renounce ill Company, you will not be cenſur'd, as you have been, for not cenſuring their Impieties. The *Convocation* at *Oxford*, in the Days of Tyranny, were ſufficiently forward and explicite in damning, by their deteſtable *Decree*, ſince worthily burnt by the proper Hand of the common Hangman, by Order of the Legiſlature; I ſay, that black Aſſembly were forward and clear enough in damning all thoſe Principles of Liberty, which ever have been and ever will be the Principles of *Wiſe Men* and *Free Men*. Conſult your own

Repu-

Reputation and the Welfare of Mankind, by treading Antipodes to that wicked Assembly.

I cannot pass over in Silence, that shameful want of Charity found amongst too many of you, and every Day complain'd of to no purpose. Allowing Charity to be a Christian Grace (and the Apostle calls it the highest) I would be glad to know in what Instance you practise that Grace your selves, or promote it in others. As to such who deny the regular Means of Salvation to all Communions, except their own and that of *Rome*, they bring this Charge home to their own Door; since their Courtesy to those of the same Spirit with themselves, and their good Opinion of them, is not Charity, but Self-love and *Faction*. Highwaymen, no doubt, call one another honest Fellows, as frequently and habitually as other

Men do; whereas their Honesty is only a wicked Fidelity to a Nest and Confederacy of Rogues, and they are only honest to their Fellow-Thieves: But true Honesty is the same to all Men, and to all Men alike.

The like may be said of Charity; it is tried and exercised upon those who are of a Persuasion different from ours. But to flatter and be complaisant to those of the same Imaginations, or the same Craft with our selves, merely because they are of the same Craft, is such a new-fangled Charity, as would beat the old *Christian* Charity of St. *Paul* quite out of the World: And yet that this is the true Cause, and the true State of modern Orthodox Charity, appears abundantly from hence, that the most wicked good Churchman has more Complement paid him, and more Favour shewn him, than the most righte-

ous

ous, moſt godly Diſſenter. Nay, by the ſervile Court paid by many, very many, to thoſe of their Patrons, who lived Libertines, and died Atheiſts; and by their barbarous Uſage of peaceable, religious Diſſenters, (blameable only for being Diſſenters) it would ſeem as if Virtue were no longer the Object of their Affection, nor Vice of their Averſion.

For God's ſake, Gentlemen, abandon this damning Spirit, which is a Contradiction to Religion, and a Reproach to Humaiiity; aſſume Charity for all Men, or drop all Pretenſions to Chriſtianity; learn to be temperate and well-bred, or ceaſe claiming to be Gentlemen: Leave reviling, as you would be thought Preachers and Exhorters; and, as you would be thought Succeſſors to the Apoſtles, concern not your ſelves with worldly Power, of which the Apoſtles had None.

You

You would not ſure be thought a Sett of Eccleſiaſticks, detach'd both from *Chriſtians* and *Heathens*; and yet, by contending not only for worldly Power, but for independent worldly Power, ſuperior to all the Powers of the World, you ſhew, as many of you as do ſo, that you are a Diſcredit to Chriſtians, and yet are worſe than Heathens. It was the good Counſel of *Biſhop Hall* to *Laud*, who was confounding all Things Human and Divine, that he would be *either Fiſh or Fleſh; either throw away his Wings, or pull out his Claws.* For God's ſake, Gentlemen, tell us what Religion you are of?——I mean ſuch of you as aſſert the Poſitions above quoted. To what Claſs of Religions, think you, theſe Men belong? To None, certainly, that ever was in the World. They cannot even make conſiſtent Papiſts, tho' That ſeems to be their higheſt Am-

Ambition. Their Popery, I own, is true Popery, and yet it is Popery without a *Pope*. I cannot ſpeak ſo favourably of the Chriſtianity they pretend to; tho' That too is Chriſtianity without Chriſt, who was all Meekneſs, Humility, and Love; who was Omnipotent, but diſclaim'd all Power; who was Infallible, and yet would Judge no Man—Are you, Gentlemen, his Succeſſors? Do your Champions reſemble this Picture? They are poor, frail, erring, mortal Men, and yet wou'd act as if they were omnipotent and dictate as if they were infallible. Good God! Gentlemen, what Madneſs to deal thus with us before they had burnt our Bibles, or put out our Eyes.

Do we not ſee Clergymen actuated by as ſavage and unreaſonable Paſſions as any Sett of Men living? And would you

you pretend to govern abſolutely thoſe who have at leaſt as much Virtue, Senſe and Sobriety, as your ſelves; who, as 'tis plain from your Lives, cannot govern yourſelves better than others? Have we not ſeen their Heads as deep in wicked Counſel, and their Hands as deep in Crimes, as the Heads and Hands of any Society of Men upon Earth? And can you expect that we will truſt the moſt important Care in the World, the Care of our Souls, to Men who take no Care of their own; or rather do not ſeem to think they have any? What Opinion, think you, can we have of their Power with Heaven, when we behold them inceſſantly contending for, and purſuing Power upon Earth, which is inconſiſtent with the Ways of Heaven? It is Time, high Time, Gentlemen, to give over, and to remember that we neither want Eyes nor Memory.

There

There has been a long and almoſt general Charge againſt the Clergy of all Ages and Countries, for neglecting to preach and enforce, as much and as clearly as they ought, the great Doctrines of Morality, the beſt Mark of Religion, and the beſt Stay of Human Society: It is indeed Religion it ſelf; and that Religion which does not produce Morality, deſerves another Name. Morality is the only Religion which Human Society, conſidered as ſuch, has any Occaſion to ſee practis'd. If a Man is really Moral, neither the Civil Magiſtrate, nor his Fellow Citizens, ought to have any Concern what he believes, or how he believes. Our Actions are in our Power, but our Thoughts are not, no more than our Dreams: Belief neceſſarily follows Evidence; and where the Evidence does not appear ſufficient, a Man cannot believe if he would: There was Virtue in the

World

World before there was *Orthodoxy* in it; which hard, equivocal, prieſtly Word has done more Miſchief to Mankind, than all the Tyrants that ever plagued the Earth. This is worthy the Conſideration of the Laity. Yes, Gentlemen, *Orthodoxy* has made many Tyrants, and exceeded all. What can be ſaid to this *Fact?*

I allow, that Prieſts often contend for good Works; but, without a Paradox, the good Works they contend for, are, for the moſt Part, not only not Morality, but, on the contrary, are often very wicked and ſinful. The Endowing of Churches and Monaſteries is, for Example, with them a great good Work; and yet it has generally prov'd a miſchievous Liberality, which evidently hurt Religion and Human Society, and frequently deſtroyed Both. I call upon you, Gentlemen, to ſhew where and when the Chri-

Chriſtian Religion ever thriv'd or gain'd by Riches? I, on my Side, can ſhew that they have been always Poyſon to it. Riches firſt made Prieſts Rampant, and ſuch Prieſts ſoon defaced and ruin'd Religion; but ſtill more or leſs effectually, as their Revenues and Power were greater or ſmaller. Chriſtianity flouriſhed moſt when it had neither worldly Prieſts nor worldly Endowments. Will you deny this? In ſhort, their preaching good Works has been generally preaching themſelves, who were the chief Gainers by them. And as to thoſe good Works which did not promiſe any Advantage to the Clergy, they either always oppos'd them, or never encourag'd them. We cannot forget your Behaviour at the Beginning of our preſent Charity-Schools, how you every where oppoſed them, till you had got the Management of them into your own Hands;

Hands; and now you as violently promote them out of other Mens Pockets. Whether your Government of thoſe Schools promotes the Welfare of the Common-wealth, (if you can bear that Word) appears abundantly from the bitter and diſaffected Spirit found in them.

By *Morality*, therefore, is meant a Thing quite different from ſuch *good Works*. Morality is Natural Religion, which prompts us to do Good to all Men, and to all Men alike, without Regard to their Speculations, no more than to their Cloaths, or to the Colour of their Hair, which is as much in their Power as their Faith is. Morality is a ſocial Virtue, or rather the Mother of all ſocial Virtues: It wiſhes and promotes unlimited and univerſal Happineſs to the whole World: It regards not a *Chriſtian* more than a *Jew* or an *Indian*, any further than as he is

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a better Citizen; and not ſo much, if he is not.

Barbeyrac, in his excellent Preface to his Tranſlation of *Puffendorf de Jure Naturæ & Gentium*, has ſhewn us, by a fine Detail of Paſſages, how the *Pagan*, the *Jewiſh*, and too many *Chriſtian* Prieſts, have all ever agreed in concealing, diſguiſing, mangling, calumniating, and oppoſing the eternal Principles of *Morality* or *Natural Religion*. The Religion of theſe holy Hirelings conſiſted either in a long Rout of Ceremonies, as tedious as ridiculous; or in certain abſtruſe Points, which could never be known, and were not worth knowing; and always in great Pomp and Pride; and in Dominion, where they could get it. It was either a Religion of the Body, or a Religion of the Imagination, or a Religion of Shew, Profit and Terror. In fine, the bleſſed Clubs

of Eccleſiaſticks of all Religions, in whatever elſe they differ'd, yet always accorded in this, that the Religion they contriv'd, agreed neither with Heaven nor Earth, neither with Reaſon nor good Humour, but only fitted themſelves and their own Views.

Mr. *Barbeyrac*, in his Preface, has given us a diverting Specimen of the Abſurdities and Ravings of thoſe Reverend old Gentlemen, whom we call *the Fathers*. And in all the Inſtances he brings, it is hard, if not impoſſible to ſay, whether the Uncharitableneſs, Roguery, or Stupidity of theſe old Saints, appears uppermoſt.

This Preface is every way ſo excellent, that I have prevail'd upon a Friend of mine, a Gentleman of *Gray's-Inn*, to tranſlate it into *Engliſh*, for the Inſtruction of the Laity. A Reverend Divine or

Two

Two have tranſlated the Book it ſelf; but no Divine has yet thought fit to give us the Preface. My Countrymen may therefore ſoon expect it from him, with an Introduction.

Gentlemen, I have but two Queſtions to ask of you, and I have done. Pray to what is it owing, that the uſual Spirit and Zeal of this Nation againſt Popery, are now quite extinct; inſomuch, that in the Neighbourhood of great Popiſh Families, your Flocks grow daily thinner, and the Maſs-houſes ſtronger; as I am able to ſhew in ſome Inſtances? And, Secondly, what is become of the Bundle of Papers ſent by Mr. *Leſlie* to a former Convocation, and containing a Project for a Union between the Proteſtant Church of *England* and the Popiſh Church of *France*? And I deſire you will acquaint the World with the Reaſons, why no Notice or Cenſure was paſſed upon them.

I ſhall ſay nothing here of the uſual Way taken to anſwer Antagoniſts, not by Reaſon or Scripture, but by downright Force, Hardſhips and Oppreſſion. The late poſthumous Sermon of *Daniel Burgeſs*, call'd, *The Craftſmen*, has done this to my Hand; and therefore I haſte to conclude.

I am GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt Humble and

moſt Obedient Servant,

BRITISH 7 DE 86 MUSEUM

The Independent Whig.

THE Independent Whig.

NUMBER I.

Juſtum & tenacem propoſiti virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus inſtantis tyranni
Mente quatit ſolidâ.
HORAT. Lib. 3. Od. 3.

Wedneſday, January 20. 1720.

The INTRODUCTION.

WHOEVER goes about to reform the World, undertakes an Office obnoxious to Malice, and beſet with Difficulties. It ſpeaks a Confidence of his own Capacity, which prompts him to ſet up for the School-maſter

of Mankind; and it infers a Charge of Corruption or Ignorance in his Pupils, out of which he aſſumes to whip them. As every Man has a good Conceit of his own Merit, he thinks himſelf undervalued by Inſtruction, and is provoked by Correction. The Confeſſion of our own Weakneſs, and that of another's better Senſe, is generally both contained in the taking of Advice, which is ſeldom taken for that Reaſon.

Beſides, Blindneſs and Prejudice are ſeldom to be reſigned but with Pain; and therefore, for the moſt Part, are not reſigned at all. It is but an unacceptable Civility to offer to let in the Rays of Underſtanding upon thoſe Minds, which are uſed to ſubſiſt in the Dark. It is like opening Day-Light upon a Neſt of Owls; it always ſets them a Screetching.

However, the Difference is conſiderable between natural and acquired Ignorance, and the laſt is much more incurable than the firſt. The one is capable, and often willing, to be informed; whereas the other thinks it ſelf above it, and is too wiſe to learn. There can be no Cure for one, who is taught to be a Blockhead: His Ignorance is the Fruit of Inſtruction, and has coſt him great Pains; and ſo his Pride is engaged to ſupport it. As he has improved his Mind into learned Darkneſs, ſo he ſtands upon his Guard againſt Common Senſe, is Proof againſt all the Aſſaults of Reaſon, and ſcorns its Power. If

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he does not take you for his Enemy, and uſe you accordingly; yet, at leaſt, he will pity your Miſtakes, and perhaps pray for your Illumination.

It will probably be ſaid, by ſome of my Readers, that I here deſcribe my ſelf and my own Performances, and perhaps with too much Truth. There lived, not long ſince, a Poet, who made excellent Criticiſms upon the moſt applauded Plays, and afterwards writ one himſelf obnoxious to them all.

But neither theſe, nor any other Difficulties, or Diſcouragements, ſhall hinder me from the generous Attempt of endeavouring to reform Mankind. I have the Magnanimity to face them all, and ſet about the Work; though I am ſufficiently ſenſible of the Greatneſs of the Deſign, and have long wiſhed that ſome abler Genius would have undertaken it.

I confeſs there have been ſome ſeeming Attempts of this Kind, which were carried on with great Dexterity and Wit, and brought great Credit and other valuable Advantages to the Authors; but I ſhould be glad to know what Service they have done to the Publick. The expoſing of ſmall Faults can do but ſmall Service; and People may be ſingular in their Humours, and vain in their Dreſs, without hurting human Society. A Beau may wear a fine Coat, and a gaudy Sword-Knot, without prejudicing the Common-wealth, or in-

deed any one Member of it: Nor can I ſee any dreadful Malignity in a hooped Petticoat. A Lady may keep a Squirrel, and diverſify her Face with Fifty Patches on a Side, without invading private or publick Property. There is no Michief in a harmleſs Snuff-Box, or a Diamond-Ring; nor do laced Cloaths, or a clouded Cane, prejudice Trade; nor the flirting of a Fan ſhake our Conſtitution. A terrible Fellow with a long Sword may be a peaceable Neighbour; and a Coquet may ſalute her Lap-Dog, and yet not endanger our Liberties.

Theſe little Sallies and Excreſcencies of Humour, as they give real Pleaſure and Happineſs to the Proprietors themſelves, ſo they often entertain wiſer People, who might otherwiſe grow too ſevere for want of a little Laughing. And yet, I will own, that many Papers, upon that Subject, have juſtly merited univerſal Eſteem and Admiration.

But the greater and more important Miſchiefs, which afflict human Society, have been, for the moſt Part, left untouch'd by our fineſt Writers; and Prieſtcraft and Tyranny have been ſeldom attacked by any, but rather flattered and ſupported. Mr. *Saville* is ſaid to have replied to a *Frenchman*, who exulted upon the fine Writings of his Countrymen, *That there were but Two Subjects in Nature worth a Wiſe Man's Thoughts, namely*, Religion *and* Government, *and they durſt*

ſpeak

ſpeak of neither. But it is our peculiar Happineſs to live in a Country, where we may ſpeak our Minds freely and openly upon any Subject, within the Bounds of good Manners and Virtue; which, I hope, I ſhall never tranſgreſs.

I own, the *Free-Thinker* is a uſeful, as well as a fine Paper. I have ſeen ſome Diſcourſes of his, which, in my Opinion, are inimitable; eſpecially thoſe upon *Superſtition* and *Enthuſiaſm.* Moſt that come from him are inſtructive, and all are elegant. I hope ſo worthy a Writer has ſuitable Encouragement. I have not the good Fortune to know that ingenious and deſerving Gentleman; but I am told that, beſides his Capacity and publick Principles, and the Work he is now engaged in, he has done perſonal Services to the Government, which, in any other Country, would entitle him to a very good Station in it: If he has none in *this*, it is, no doubt, owing to the publick Spirit of the Great; who will, by no Fault or Courteſy of theirs, divert him from inſtructing his Country twice a Week. I ſhall only add upon this Head, that as no Man is ſo well qualify'd as the *Free-Thinker* himſelf to execute his own Plan, mine will not by any Means interfere with his, as will be ſhewn in my next Paper.

There was one Weekly Paper, which, had it gone on, would have prevented this; I mean, the *Free-Thinker Extraordinary.* It breathed an uncommon Spirit of publick Li-

berty, and ſhewed ſufficiently the Capacity of the Author to do Service to Mankind. But when he had ſhewed his Skill, and engaged our Attention, he dropped us and his Subject, and made it neceſſary, though dangerous, to ſucceed him. It was never asked why he undertook it; for every one ſaw the Reaſons and Advantages of it: But why he deſerted it, has been the Subject of Enquiry; and the rather, becauſe it is evident he wanted neither Art nor Materials.

For my ſelf, who have no manner of Attachment to any Party, I ſhall not be afraid to ſpeak my Mind of All, with that Freedom which becomes Truth and Independency; and the flattering of Power, in any Shape or Hands whatſoever, ſhall be the laſt Charge againſt me.

There is no Power in Names to conſecrate Perſons or Things, or to alter their Nature; and yet the Majority of Mankind have always worſhipped the Idols of Words and Sounds; and a Monoſyllable has often done more than an Army, towards keeping them under Awe and Servitude. In Catholick Countries, the Word *Pope*, or *Prieſt*, carries with it more Reverence than does the Old or New Teſtament, and more Terror than an armed Hoſt. And lately in *France*, the Words, *Grand Monarque*, or the *Glory* of the *Grand Monarque*, could keep a vaſt Nation in Miſery and Wooden Shoes, and carry a Hundred

dred Thouſand of them at a Time to the Slaughter.

This blind Devotion to Names, ſo inconſiſtent with true Liberty, which ſhews it ſelf in *Judging* as well as *Acting*, has alſo prevailed in this free Nation to a ſhameful and dangerous Degree. We know what terrible Lengths the Words *Church*, *Clergy*, *Divine Right*, and the like undefined Nonſenſe, have gone towards enſlaving us; and what a ſteddy and ridiculous Reverence is ſtill paid to them, even when they are evidently apply'd to the moſt impious and tyrannical Purpoſes.

Nor does this Charge of *worſhipping Words*, lie altogether at the Door of one Party only. Even that Side, which boaſts a greater Share of Reaſon and Freedom, is manifeſtly guilty of the like Idolatry to Names and Perſons, and in Inſtances of the greateſt Importance. They do not conſider the Speech, but the *Speaker*; nor what is done, but the *Doer*; and conſequently praiſe, *by the Great*, in their own Leaders, what they would loudly condemn in any others.

Credulity and implicit Belief are equally as dangerous in Government as in Religion: They have made the World Slaves, and they keep it ſo. Every Party has its Pope, and ſome have ſeveral; who, like him at *Rome*, never fail to make an ill Uſe of the Faith of their Followers, and deceive thoſe who truſt in them.

I have ſaid thus much to apprize the Reader, that this will be an Independent Paper, which will ſtoop to no Party, nor have any Friends or Enemies, but ſuch as make themſelves ſo, by eſpouſing the Intereſts of Truth or Falſhood.

NUMBER II.

Wedneſday, January 27. 1720.

The Deſign *of this* PAPER.

RELIGION was deſigned by Heaven, for the Benefit of Men alone: It teaches us to moderate our Deſires, calm our Paſſions, and be uſeful and beneficent to one another; and whatever does not contribute to thoſe Ends, ought not to be called by that Name. For, Almighty God has infinite Happineſs in himſelf, which we can neither diminiſh nor add to; and therefore he can require nothing of us, but for our own Sakes; nor command any Thing but what tends to our own Good, both here and hereafter.

I ſay it with the utmoſt Sincerity, that no Man living deſires to pay a more true and affectionate Eſteem and Reverence than my ſelf to thoſe Clergymen, who anſwer this End of their Inſtitution, and whoſe Lives and Manners grace and adorn their Profeſſion and Doctrine.

I thank God, I know many ſuch; and perceive, with Pleaſure and Tranſport, a noble Spirit of Liberty and true Religion riſing up among them; which will ſoon flame out far and wide, if it is not ſtifled by thoſe, whoſe true Intereſt and Honour call aloud to them to give it Aſſiſtance and Protection.

That Profeſſion muſt be always moſt honourable and deſerving from Mankind, which is moſt uſeful and advantageous to them. As it is therefore impoſſible to ſhew too much Reſpect to virtuous Clergymen, ſo the corrupt Part of them cannot be too much expos'd. As the Poſſeſſion which they have of the Fears and Panick of ſuperſtitious People, and in the tendereſt Seaſons too, enable them to do the greateſt Miſchief, ſo the ſtrongeſt Antidotes ought to be applied to their Poiſon. It will be ridiculous to call for Protection from that Character, which they conſtantly diſgrace, and to ask Aſſiſtance from the Religion, which they neither believe nor practiſe.

I here liſt my ſelf under the Banners of the former ſort; and deſign by this Work to illuſtrate the Beauty of Chriſtianity, by expo-

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ſing the Deformity of Prieſtcraft; and to diſtinguiſh the good Clergy from the bad, by giving to each his Share of Praiſe or Infamy, according to the different Deeds done by them. I will loſe no Opportunity of doing Juſtice to the former, nor willingly to the latter.

In doing this, I ſhall go far backward; and taking Things from the Beginning, ſhew in the Courſe of theſe Papers, the Infinite Evils brought upon Mankind, from Age to Age, by the Pride and Impoſture of corrupt Eccleſiaſticks: I ſhall ſhew what a *Babel* they have built upon the Foundation of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, who were made to father Doctrines which they never taught, and to countenance Power which they always diſclaimed. I ſhall ſhew by what Arts and Intrigues they came, from being Alms-Men of the People, to be Maſters of Mankind; and how, by pretending to diſpoſe of the *Other World*, they actually uſurped and ruled *This*.

I ſhall ſhew, that notwithſtanding Chriſtianity was firſt propagated by Miracles and Mildneſs only, and the Teachers of it had no Power but to perſuade; making it withal appear, in the whole Courſe of their Lives and Preaching, that they ſought no Manner of perſonal Advantage, or any Manner of Juriſdiction over their Hearers and Converts; yet they who, without their Inſpiration and Manners, called themſelves their Succeſſors, did by Virtue of their Names, lay inſolent Claim to Dominion, and carried all Things before them, by the Dint of Terror and Excommunication. I

I ſhall ſhew, that though the Clergy, like other Militia, were raiſed and paid for protecting Mankind from their Spiritual Enemy, yet they ſoon made uſe of the Sword put into their Hands againſt their Maſters, and ſet up for themſelves. I ſhall ſhew, that notwithſtanding the whole End of their Inſtitution was to make Men wiſer and better, yet whereever *They* prevailed, Debauchery and Ignorance alſo prevailed; and the conſtant Leſſon they taught was blind Belief and blind Obedience, of both which they made themſelves the Objects. So that Superſtition was an inſeparable Creature of their Power, and the perpetual Iſſue of it; and tainted Morals and darkened Minds were the great Props of their Dominion. A good Underſtanding, and an inquiſitive Spirit, led directly to Hereſy; and a pious Life was of ill Example, and a Reproach to the Clergy; and if any one gave Offence this Way, it was but calling him *Heretick*, and delivering him over to *Satan*, and the Man was undone, and the Clergy ſafe.

I ſhall ſhew how they ſoon baniſhed the meek Spirit of the Chriſtian Religion, and growing to as great Variance with Mercy as they were with Reaſon, perverted Religion into Rage, and Zeal into Cruelty. They made the peaceable Doctrine of Jeſus a Doctrine of Blood; and excommunicated and damned by that Name, by which alone Men could be ſaved. It is true, they damned one another as much as they did other Peo-

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ple; for, agreeing in nothing but the great Principle of Intereſt, tho' they rode upon the Necks of their People, yet they never could be at Peace, nor Eaſe, among themſelves, ſo long as each Individual was not in the higheſt Place: And therefore, becauſe every one of them could not be above the reſt, they were eternally quarrelling, and giving one another to the Devil.

If one of them held any Propoſition, true or falſe, it was Reaſon enough for another to deny it, and *curſe* him into the Bargain. At laſt, there was not one Principle in their Syſtem but what was conteſted; and they agreed in nothing but their own Power, tho' at the ſame Time they diſputed what that was.

In this everlaſting Scuffle and Civil War, they had ſo mangled Truth, and muffled it up, that few could diſtinguiſh it from the falſe Images they had made of it. And yet theſe Men, who, by their conſtant Diſcords and Debates, confeſſed themſelves in endleſs Uncertainties, were the ſure and infallible Guides to others, who were obliged to believe their Gueſſes and Contradictions, on Pain of Hell-Fire.

I ſhall ſhew what a ſhameful Hand they have always had in bringing and keeping Mankind under Tyranny and Bondage to ſuch Princes, as would divide the Spoil with them. In ſuch Caſe, it was a Point of Conſcience, and a religious Duty, for Subjects to be miſerable Slaves; and Damnation but to

ſtrive

ſtrive to be happy. But if the Prince happen'd to be a Lover of Mankind, and endeavoured to protect his People in their Civil and Sacred Rights; then were they the conſtant Incendiaries of every popular and wicked Faction: They preached nothing but Sedition and Blood, till they had worked up their blind and ſtupid Votaries to Rebellions and Aſſaſſinations; and to ſuch Conduct is owing a great Part of their Power and Wealth.

I think no one, who is the leaſt converſant with Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, will deny but this was the Condition of Chriſtianity before the *Reformation*; and the chief Intent of this Paper is to let all the World know it, that they may be upon their Guard againſt the like Miſchiefs. It is certain, that the Demands of the High Clergy upon the Laity, are as great, if not greater, than they were at that Time: As *Father Paul* ſays of *England*, *The Horſe is bridled and ſadled, and the old Rider is juſt getting upon his Back.*

It is Time now to conclude this Paper, by ſaying, if my hearty Endeavours ſhall any ways contribute to detect the Impoſtures, and expoſe the wicked Practices of thoſe, who, under the proſtituted Name of Sanctity, are Foes to Truth, to Liberty, and Virtue, I ſhall think my Time and Pains well ſpent. But if not, I ſhall have the Internal Satisfaction of having attempted at leaſt to

attack

attack Vice and Corruption, however dignified or diſtinguiſhed; and the worſt which can be ſaid of me is,

Magnis tamen excidit auſis

NUMBER III.

Wedneſday, February 3. 1720.

Of the Contempt *of the* Clergy.

RING the Bells backward! The Temple, the Temple is on Fire! The High Prieſts look aghaſt, and the People ſtare, and all cry out, The Craft, the Craft is in Danger!

This I expected, and was prepared for, when I firſt engaged in the Undertaking: Touch a galled Horſe and he will wince, tho' 'tis in order to cure him. I knew a Gentleman, who found out a Murtherer by looking ſtedfaſtly in his Face. When any one is conſcious of his own Crimes or Infirmities, he is jealous of every Approach towards a Diſcovery, and often makes one by it.

It

It is remarkable, that no Order or Society of Men is so apprehensive of Disrespect, or can so little bear the Examination into their Pretensions, as the greatest Part of the Ecclesiasticks: If you ridicule or laugh at the Professions of Law and Physick, the Lawyers and Physicians will laugh with you: The same is true of Soldiers, Merchants, and the Professors of almost all Arts and Sciences, who generally are the first to expose the Knaves and Fools amongst them.

If a Lawyer, Soldier, or Merchant, deserves the Pillory; neither *Westminster-Hall*, the *Army*, or the *East-India* Company, are in an Uproar; or complain that the Law, Trade, or the Soldiery, are wounded thro' his Sides; nor endeavour to raise a Mobb in his Behalf, or rebel in Token of their unlimited Submission to Government. The Fair Sex do not think themselves ill used, when a Bawd is ty'd to a Cart, or a naughty Nymph beats Hemp: The Eleven Apostles lost no Credit when *Judas* hang'd himself; nor would any honest Clergyman, tho' ever so many of the other Sort did the same, or if it was done for them.

But I do not know by what Judgment or Fatality it happens, that if you but touch the Pretences or Vices of the Meanest of the Ecclesiasticks, so many of their Body are in an Uproar: They roar aloud, their Order is exposed, their Mysteries derided and profaned, and Religion it self in Danger of being subverted,

verted; and *Socinian*, *Deiſt* or *Atheiſt*, is the beſt Word that is often given to their beſt Friend; and ſometimes all of them are given.

All other Societies of Men are contented with the Eſteem and Honour, which reſult from the Uſefulneſs of their Employments and Profeſſions, and the Worth and Capacity of their Members; and yet none ſtand in ſuch a Situation, and have ſo many Advantages to acquire Reſpect and Homage, as the Clergy.

Their Office is evidently adapted to promote the Welfare of Human Nature, and to propagate its Peace and Proſperity in this World, as well as its eternal Felicity in the next: ſo that it is the Intereſt of all Men to honour it; and none but a Madman will condemn and ridicule what has a manifeſt Tendency to the Security and Happineſs of all Mankind.

The Temporal Condition of the Clergy does likewiſe place them far above Contempt: They have great Revenues, Dignities, Titles, and Names of Reverence, to diſtinguiſh them from the reſt of the World; and it is too well known that Wealth, Power, and Learning, carry to the Vulgar a kind of Myſtery, and diſtant Grandeur, and command not only Admiration and Reverence, but often a ſuperſtitious Veneration.

Added to this, they have the Poſſeſſion and Direction of our Fears, and are admitted

in Health and Sickneſs: Every *Sunday* they have the ſole Opportunity to gain our Eſteem by worthy and uſeful Inſtructions, and all the Week by their good Lives: They educate us whilſt young, influence us in our middle Age, and govern us in our Dotage, and we neither live nor die without them.

A numerous Body of Men, ſo conſtituted and endowed, ſo privileged and poſted, are capable of being moſt uſeful and beneficent to Society, if their Actions are ſuitable to their Profeſſions. All the World will acknowledge and pay a willing Homage to their Merit, and there will be no need of demanding, much leſs of extorting Reſpect, or of Complaints and Exclamations for want of it. The Danger lies on the other Side; for there are ſuch Seeds of Superſtition in human Nature, that all our Prudence and Caution will be little enough to prevent even Adoration to their Perſons.

If, therefore, they want that Reſpect they are ſo fond of, they cannot be to ſeek for the true Reaſons, *viz.* their own Corruptions and Worthleſneſs, which muſt be exceeding great to get the better of ſo many Advantages. When a certain late Dutcheſs was complaining to a Gentleman of more Wit than Complaiſance, that (in Spite of her great Quality and Revenue) ſhe was ſubject to continual Affronts; *Pray, Madam,* ſays he, *is not Mr.* Goodman *an excellent Actor?*

If Clergymen would avoid Contempt, let them avoid the Cauſes of it. Let them not be ſtarting and maintaining eternal Claims to worldly Power: Let them not be hunting after Honours, courting Preferments, and buſtling for Riches: Let them not be aſſuming to give Models of human Government, or to adjuſt and determine the Titles of Princes: Let them not pretend to puniſh any Man for his Way of Worſhip, and to give him to the Devil for his Money or Opinion: Let them not join in Factions, and foment Rebellions: Let them not defy Heaven by ſwearing falſly: Let them not promote Servitude in the People, and Barbarity in the Prince; and let them not flatter wicked Kings, and plague and diſturb good Ones.

Let them win Reſpect, and wear it; but let them not earn Infamy, and demand Veneration. Let not thoſe of them, who gratify Brutiſh Appetites, and live in all Vileneſs, add Want of Shame to their Want of Grace, and bewail that they are contemned, while they are deſerving it. If a Man pretending to great Gravity and Regard, ſhould dreſs himſelf up in a Fool's Coat, and a Pair of Horns, would not People laugh at him in Spite of themſelves? And would not his Reſentment and Rebukes add ſtill to their Mirth? A Clergyman who is Drunk on *Saturday*, will but, with an ill Grace, talk of his Dignity and Ambaſſadorſhip on *Sunday*. Ought we to own and reverence that Man

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as our Guide to Heaven, who is himſelf going a contrary Road, and rioting in thoſe Vices which his whole Duty is to reſtrain?

The Honour therefore of the good Clergy is conſulted and promoted by expoſing the bad. A profane Prieſt is the Diſgrace and Bane of his own Order; and they who ſtand by him, adopt his Infamy, and defile themſelves. If he neglects God, and diſturbs human Society, how do the Clergy ſuffer tho' he is whip'd or hang'd? His Puniſhment is their Credit and Security, becauſe by it is lopped off from their Body a gangrened Limb, that incumbred and deformed the reſt.

Atheiſts, who are not reſtrained by the Fear of God, which is ſtronger than all the Laws in the World, ought, in the Opinion of Politicians, as well as Caſuiſts, to be expelled from the Society of Men: And ſhall more Mercy be ſhewn to thoſe who are ſo hardened in Impiety, that tho' they believe a God, yet dread not his Vengeance, but ſwear by his great and terrible Name to an avowed Falſhood? Or can the Clergy ſuffer by the Loſs of ſuch execrable Company?

An unfortunate *Levite*, ſome Years ſince, had his Head cleft by a Butcher, who caught him in Bed with his Wife; and neither the Number of Reverend Auditors, who attended the Tryal, a due Regard to the Cloth, or an Apprehenſion of the Carnage it might produce, could hinder the Judge from directing the Jury to call the Crime only *Man-*

Slaughter; which ſo provoked the meek Spirit and Patience of a Holy Brother, then preſent, that he cried out in the Court, *Hey Day! Here's a fine World! if theſe Things are ſuffered, there will be no living for us.*

No chaſte or ſober Clergyman could be terrify'd with ſuch an Example, or think the Church in any Danger by it. Does any vertuous Member of the Holy Order ſuffer either in his Perſon or Character, if *Biſs* diverts his Spectators in a Pillory, or Parſon *Paul* his Auditors upon a Gallows? None can ſhare in their Diſgrace, but thoſe who ſympathize in their Crimes, or cenſure their Puniſhment. How much more honeſt, as well as prudent, would it be to remove the Guilt from themſelves, by throwing it all upon the devoted Head; to put the evil Thing out of the City; and to imitate the Sagacity of the horned Herd, who always drive the blown Deer from amongſt them, where he ſeeks his Refuge, tho' at the Hazard of involving the whole Tribe in his Misfortune?

NUMBER IV.

Wednesday, February 10. 1720.

Of the Explication *of the* Scripture.

TO fear God, and keep his Commandments, is the Summary of the Old Teſtament; and to believe that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh, is the Compendium of the New. Whoever can prove his Obedience and Faith, by theſe two plain Duties, fulfils the Law and the Goſpel.

It was moſt agreeable to the infinite Goodneſs and tender Mercies of God, to make every Thing, which he requires of us weak Men, obvious and clear. The Importance of the Duty implies its Certainty, which is not to be found in Phraſes either doubtful or obſcure. The Scriptures are juſtly ſtiled the *Revealed Will* of God, and are addreſs'd to *all* Mankind, and given to remain as a Rule of Faith and Manners to the End of the World. It muſt therefore follow, that whatever is neceſſary to be known in them, is to

be as eaſy and intelligible at one Time as another, and to all Men alike.

Where their Meaning cannot be poſitively determined, a new Inſpiration will be neceſſary to reduce them to Certainty; and if that is wanting, every Thing elſe is but Conjecture. Whoever therefore goes about to put a Conſtruction upon ſuch Paſſages in Scripture, and enjoins us to believe his Interpretation, does not demand Submiſſion to the Word of God, but to his own Authority and Imagination.

What Uſe is there of an unintelligible Propoſition; or of a Revelation which wants to be reveal'd? Almighty God will never require of us to ſee in the Dark, till he has given us new Eyes; nor to believe any Article, or obey any Precept, till we underſtand him, and know what he means. A Rule which is not plain, is no Rule at all: Nor will he make a Law binding, or the Tranſgreſſion of it a Sin, till we know what it is.

It is true, human Laws oblige all Men to ſubmit to the Penalty annex'd to the Tranſgreſſion, tho' many perhaps may never hear of them. But this is to prevent the conſtant Plea of Ignorance, which otherwiſe would be made by all Offenders. The Corruption and Imbecility of human Nature make this Procedure neceſſary. But it is far otherwiſe in the Diſpenſation of Providence: The Author of it ſees our Hearts, penetrates the moſt ſecret Receſſes of our Souls, makes indulgent

dulgent Allowances for our Weakneſſes, and expects nothing from us, but what he has given us the Means and Abilities of knowing and performing. He requires us not to make Brick without Straw. He judges by the Intention, not the Action. We cannot offend him, but voluntarily; much leſs offer him an Affront, when we deſign Reſpect and Obedience.

The Creator and Preſerver of Mankind cannot take Delight in puzling his Creatures with Darkneſs and Ambiguities, and in Points too where their Souls are in Danger. He is not a rigid Maſter, who would reap where he did not ſow. This would be a cruel Mockery, unworthy of the Divine Being, *Who has brought Life and Immortality to Light.*

Nothing is plainer than the Law and the Goſpel. Whoever ſays the contrary, does no leſs than accuſe the great and good God, and juſtify wicked and wilful Men, whom he has left without Excuſe, by telling them clearly what he expects from them. *What does God require of thee, O Man, but to do Juſtice, to love Mercy, and to walk Humbly?* ſaid One of his Prophets out of his Mouth. I am very ſure there is no Difficulty in underſtanding this.

The obſcure Paſſages in Scripture could not be intended for our Inſtruction. Infinite Wiſdom has hid them from our Eyes, to be brought to Light in his own Time, and then

to anſwer the Ends of his Providence; or perhaps to baffle our vain Pride and Curioſity. Who art thou, O Man, who wilt be wiſer than the Omniſcient; who wilt make thoſe Things neceſſary, which he has not made ſo; wilt diſcover what he has thought fit to conceal, and know his Secrets whether he will or no? This would be to mend the Scripture; to make it more uſeful than God has made it; to help the Holy Ghoſt, and to teach the Almighty how to expreſs himſelf.

How abſurd would it be to ſend Cook-Maids and Day-Labourers to ſtudy *Ariſtotle* and *Suarez*; to rake into the Jargon of the Schools; to learn all Languages, examine all Syſtems, and to diſcover of themſelves all Errors, Interpolations and Miſtakes; or to do what is much more ridiculous, *that is*, wholly throw themſelves and their Salvation, in moſt Countries, upon a Confederacy of Men, who have an Intereſt to deceive and oppreſs them, and ever did ſo when they had an Opportunity; who have been always at Variance with one another, and with themſelves; and have agreed in nothing, but the miſleading of thoſe who truſted them! And yet One of theſe muſt be the unhappy Circumſtance of the greateſt Part of Mankind, if what I have ſaid before is not true; which we may be ſure the Divine Goodneſs cannot permit.

Nothing

Nothing is more evident from Hiſtory, than that moſt, if not all, the Improvements and Reformations of Religion have been made not only without, but in Oppoſition to theſe Men. There have been near a Million of them kept in conſtant Pay for the beſt Part of Seventeen Hundred Years, to teach the World by their Precepts, and reform it by their Example; and yet I am perſuaded they will not pretend that Religion is plainer, the Scriptures better underſtood, or that Mankind are more wiſe or virtuous for all their Inſtructions. So little have we been benefited by their Labours, and for all the Money they have receiv'd! I wiſh I could not ſay that the World has gradually decreas'd in Piety and Virtue, as theſe its Teachers have advanced in Riches and Power. It is owned by the beſt of themſelves.

It is the fartheſt from my Thoughts, by any Thing I have before ſaid, to undervalue their true Office, much leſs to make it uſeleſs. I ſincerely think it abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace and Happineſs of Society. The *Roman* Conſuls had an Officer attending their Triumphial Chariots, whoſe Buſineſs it was to cry out *Memento mori.*

I would have theſe too anſwer the ſame End of their Inſtitution; to preſs the Reading of the Scriptures upon their Hearers; to ſhew their Excellency and Advantages; to inculcate the *plain Precepts* of Faith and Morality contained in them; and to demonſtrate the

the Goodneſs of God to Men, by proving that he has laid down to us, in plain Words, every Duty which he requires of us, either to himſelf, our Neighbour, or our ſelves. But let them not diſtract, inſtead of inſtructing; and confound ignorant People with Metaphyſical Subtilties, which the Wiſeſt cannot comprehend. Let them not ſtrain ridiculous and ſelfiſh Conſequences from obſcure Parts of Scripture, and make the Almighty mean what he never ſaid.

Let them give us God's Will in God's Words.

Another End of their Office is to execute thoſe Duties of our moſt Holy Religion, which the Word of God has left at large for every one to do, but which indeed are neceſſary to be perform'd by ſingle Perſons in the ſeveral Churches or Societies of Chriſtians; ſuch as reading the Scriptures and publick Prayers aloud to the Congregation, and adminiſtring the Sacraments: What by the Goſpel Liberty is the Right of every one (as ſhall be unanſwerably made out hereafter) is by the Conſent of Voluntary and National Churches become the Duty and Buſineſs of particular Perſons, who are ſet aſide and paid for that Purpoſe.

In what I have before ſaid, I have the Concurrence of the beſt and wiſeſt of our own Clergy, who acknowledge and contend that we are not to take the Almighty's Meaning

ing at ſecond-hand, nor receive that for his Will which we our ſelves do not find to be ſo; but that we are to enquire before we believe, and to be convinc'd before we aſſent; every Aſſertion or Propoſition, before it is examin'd, being alike to the Underſtanding, as every Colour is to the Blind: They own that our Judgment ought to be at no Man's Service, nor our Minds controuled in religious Matters, but by God alone; for as no Man's Soul can be ſaved by Proxy, ſo no Man ought to exerciſe his Faith by Proxy.

NUMBER V.

Wedneſday, February 17. 1720.

The Unfitneſs *of the* Clergy *to Teach* Others.

AS in my laſt Paper, I hope, I have fully ſhewn that Clergymen have no Right to interpret the Scriptures for other People; ſo I ſhall endeavour in this, to prove that they are the leaſt qualify'd, for the moſt Part, to do ſo, of any

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Set or Society of Men, in their preſent State of Learning and Virtue. This I do with a ſincere Deſign to ſerve Them, as well as the Laity; hoping that when they ſee from what Source the Neglect and Contempt, which they ſo much complain of, proceed, they will join heartily in their own Reformation, in anſwering the Ends of their Inſtitution, and in being hereafter as uſeful to their Country, as many of them have been formerly miſchievous.

Uſe makes every Poſture familiar to the Body, and every Opinion to the Mind. We are told that the *Brahmans*, in *India*, do, by long Habit, ſo diſtort their Limbs, that they grow in the Situation which they are put in. Every Day's Experience proves that we aſſimulate with the Company we keep, as well in our Sentiments, as in the Aire and Mein of our Bodies. Not only different Nations, but often Sects, Profeſſions, and Trades, are to be known by their Phiz and Behaviour. A Sailor or a Taylor (to ſay nothing of their Betters) may be found out, however they diſguiſe themſelves.

Nothing but keeping the beſt Company can give a free and eaſy Carriage; and an open and generous Converſation alone can diſengage our Minds from the ſtrong Impreſſions of our early Education. The Habit of thinking freely, and of expreſſing freely thoſe Thoughts on all Occaſions, enables us to judge well of Men and Things. Our Minds

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are poliſhed by Colliſion; and a liberal Converſation not only ſtarts all Difficulties, but ſolves them, if they are to be ſolved.

Almighty God gives us Faculties to uſe them; and it is Ingratitude, as well as Folly, to return the Gift upon his Hands. Truth can never ſuffer by an impartial Examination, but on the contrary will receive Strength and Advantage from it. It is Error and Impoſture alone, which dread a fair Enquiry, as being conſcious of their own Weakneſs.

I think I may therefore ſafely affirm, that whatever Body or Society of Men are moſt reſtrained, by themſelves or others, from reaſoning freely on every Subject, and eſpecially on the moſt important of all, are the leaſt qualify'd to be the Guides and Directors of Mankind.

I will now examine how far this is the Circumſtance of the Clergy in moſt Countries. They are no ſooner diſcharged from the Nurſe and the Mother, but they are delivered over to Spiritual Pædagogues, who have ſeldom the Capacity, and never the Honeſty and Courage, to venture at a *Free Thought* themſelves, and muſt conſequently be improper Channels to convey any to their Pupils.

From thence they are ſent to the Univerſities, (very commonly upon Charity) where they are hamſtringed and manacled with early *Oaths* and *Subſcriptions*, and obliged to ſwear to Notions before they know what they

they are. Their Buſineſs afterwards is not to find out what is Truth, but to defend the received Syſtem, and to maintain thoſe Doctrines which are to maintain them. Not only their preſent Revenues and Subſiſtence, but all their Expectations are annexed to certain Opinions, eſtabliſhed for the moſt Part by Popes and Synods, in corrupt and ignorant Ages; and even then often carried by Faction and Bribery, in Concert with the Deſigns and Intrigues of Stateſmen, but are ſanctify'd by Time, and are now to be received without Enquiry.

No one can fairly examine what is Truth, who has an Intereſt on either Side of the Queſtion. We are bribed by our Inclinations, in Spite of our beſt Reſolutions. Who can be heartily angry at an Opinion, which will keep a Coach and Six, or ſtrenuouſly endeavour to find out any Hereſy in it? Beſides, all Men are fond of Reſpect and Homage; and when they are in Poſſeſſion, will eſteem it but an unprofitable Study to find out that they do not deſerve them.

As Clergymen ſo educated cannot, for the Reaſons aforeſaid, be fair and impartial Judges themſelves of what is Truth, ſo their Authority can give but little Weight to ſuch Doctrines as they may think fit to teach to others. The firſt Queſtion ask'd of a ſuſpected Witneſs in every Court of Judicature is, Whether he gets or loſes by the Succeſs of the Cauſe? And, if either appears, he is con-

conſtantly ſet aſide, and not truſted with an Oath.

It is demonſtrable in Reaſon, that every Man's Pretences ought to be try'd by the ſame Teſt and Rule; and where the Evidence of a Propoſition cannot be clearly ſhewn, by one who has an Intereſt to advance it, nor proved by Miracles, all other Perſons have Reaſon to ſuſpect it of Impoſture: When what he offers will indiſputably conduce to his own Benefit, and I have only his Word that it will conduce to mine, I cannot doubt but his Kindneſs is greater for himſelf than for me, and ſhall conſequently believe that he is not doing my Buſineſs, but his own.

The Apoſtles, and ſome of the firſt Chriſtians, did not ſo teach Chriſt. They not only convinced Mankind of the Truth of what they ſaid by Miracles; but made it apparent to all the World, that they ſought no Temporal Benefit; but, on the contrary, left their Families, their Profeſſions, and all the Comforts of Life, to wander about the Earth, and preach a Doctrine infinitely advantageous to the preſent, as well as eternal State of others; and expected no Reward to themſelves in this Life, but Beggary, Stripes, and even Death it ſelf.

It is not to be wondered, that no Diſcourſes, or even diſtant Hints, are countenanced or permitted in Univerſities Abroad, which have the leaſt Tendency to oppoſe the Pride or Temporal Grandeur of the Clergy; nor

any Speculations ſuffered to be vented there, which ever ſo little break in upon received Opinions. It is not only a certain Stop to all Hopes of Preferment, to queſtion the Truth of any of their darling Notions; but you are in Danger of being expelled, and are ſure to be diſcountenanced and contemned.

The Philoſophy and Learning there taught and encouraged, are exactly calculated and adapted to this State of Darkneſs and Ignorance: They are nothing but an unintelligible Jargon of undefined Words and bare Sounds, which mean nothing, and yet can prove every Thing. With this Gibberiſh they are diverted from ſound Knowledge, by being put upon a wrong Scent; and are hindered from attaining true Wiſdom, by believing that they have got it.

All Attempts towards uſeful Learning are neglected and diſcouraged; and nothing is found out to be true in Philoſophy, but is made falſe in Religion; and the Authors and Diſcoverers are branded with Hereſy, if not Atheiſm: of which the Examples are infinite.

Thus accoutred, and thus ſet out, our young Eccleſiaſtick commences Governour and Director of Mens Conſciences. He is impatient of the leaſt Contradiction, and is all in a Flame at an Oppoſition which he has not been uſed to. As he never queſtioned the Truth of any of his own Notions himſelf, he grows outrageous at any one elſe who does,

does, and immediately cries out aloud for Fire and Faggot.

To this it is owing that the Difference between the Controverſial Writings of Gentlemen, and thoſe of Divines, is ſo very remarkable. The Firſt are carried on for the moſt Part with Humanity, and always with good Manners, even when the Matter is moſt poignant and ſarcaſtical. In the Latter, at firſt Sight, appears the *Odium Theologorum*; and Rage, Ill-breeding, and Revenge, breathe thro' every Part of them. A proper Diſpoſition this to make Converts, and govern the World!

This Temper has (even in *England*) ſhewn it ſelf viſibly, in their Treatment of a modern Biſhop, whom neither his great Penetration, his pious Life, nor the pretended Regard to his paſtoral Function, could protect from Eccleſiaſtical Hatred and Fury, for his having dared to engage in the Intereſt of Mankind.

As it is undeniably true, that what I have before deſcribed is the unhappy Circumſtance of the Clergy, in moſt Countries; ſo no Man, who has the leaſt Deſire to promote uſeful Knowledge, true Virtue, and ſound Religion amongſt Mankind, but muſt endeavour to manumit them from this State of Servitude and Darkneſs, even tho' they ſhould oppoſe it themſelves. Birds and Beaſts uſed to Lodges or Dens, are afraid to go out of them; and even Men long ſhut up in

dark Dungeons, cannot for ſome Time bear the Light of the Day. Galley Slaves, not knowing what to do with Liberty given them, have often, of their own accord, return'd to their Chains; nay, God's own People themſelves longed again for *Egyptian* Fleſh-pots and *Egyptian* Slavery, when they were fed with Food from Heaven; notwithſtanding which, *Moſes* would not gratify their brutiſh Appetites, but made them happy in Spite of themſelves.

I would therefore have every Clergyman enjoy the full Liberty which every Layman enjoys. *We* are not confined in our Searches after Truth; and why ſhould the Clergy be confined, in whoſe Hands it is more powerful and advantageous than in ours? The granting of *Eccleſiaſtical Freedom* to Churchmen is as equitable, as that of *Civil Freedom* to Laymen. I thank God, *We* poſſeſs a glorious Portion of the latter; and I heartily wiſh *Them* an equal Portion of the former.

Number VI.

Wedneſday, February 24. 1720.

Of Creeds *and* Confeſſions of Faith.

I Have ſhewn in my Fourth Paper, the Boldneſs and Abſurdity of the Expoſition of Holy Scripture, when that Expoſition is maintained and impoſed for Canonical Truth. I ſhall here proſecute the ſame Subject, merely as it relates to *Creeds* and *Confeſſions of Faith.*

In our Diſpures with the Church of *Rome*, we contend that the Scripture alone is a ſufficient Rule of Faith and Practice; and our Divines have proved it unanſwerably. But when our High-Church Prieſts argue with Diſſenters, and thoſe whom they are pleaſed to chriſten Hereticks, Holy Writ is not ſo highly complemented: It is then very ſubject to lead us into Miſtakes, and hard to be underſtood. It is true 'tis infallible, and was given us from Heaven to *be a Light unto our Feet, and a Lamp unto our Paths*; but ſtill it is dark and

inſufficient without *Human Aid and Explication.* For, though it be exceeding plain to us of the Eſtabliſhed Church of *England,* and proves us to be in the Right in every Article, Ceremony and Habit whatſoever; yet it is utterly hid from thoſe who will not accept of *our* Guidance, and ſubmit to *our* Authority. And therefore, if they refuſe to believe and obey our *Supplements* and *Improvements* of the Bible, and to accept of the Salvation which is to be had in our Church, and the Church of *Rome,* they ſhall have no Salvation at all. It is fit and Orthodox that Men ſhould periſh for following their Conſciences, and for underſtanding the Scripture without the Leave of the Ordinary.

Thus when they debate with the Papiſts, they praiſe the Scriptures, inveigh againſt the impoſing of Opinions, and ſpeak in the Stile of Diſſenters: But when they are pleaſed to rebuke Non-conformiſts, they borrow the Language of Papiſts, and urge the Authority of our Apoſtolick Church, and her divine Right to judge for others; and deal hard Language, and worſe Uſage, to all that take the ſame Privilege which they do. There is, however, this ſmall Difference between us Conformiſts and the Schiſmaticks; We have good Pay for being Orthodox, and the Separatiſt pays dear for being in the Wrong. If theſe are not two good Reaſons for delivering him over to Satan, I deſpair of finding better.

In Conſequence of this Power in High-Churchmen to be the Mouthſmen of the Bible, which if we take their Word cannot ſpeak for it ſelf, they claim a Right to make *Creeds* for others: And this is what I am now to examine.

I think it but Juſtice to the Goodneſs of God to affirm, that Belief or Disbelief can neither be a Virtue or a Crime in any One, who uſes the beſt Means in his Power of being informed. If a Propoſition is evident, we cannot avoid believing it; and where is the Merit or Piety of a neceſſary Aſſent? If it is not evident, we cannot help rejecting it, or doubting of it; and where is the Crime of not performing Impoſſibilities, or not believing what does not appear to us to be true? Are Men who have good Eyes, the more righteous for ſeeing? Or do they offend in ſeeing too well? Or do blind Men ſin, in not diſtinguiſhing Colours?

When we clearly ſee the Connexion of a Propoſition, or know that we have God's Word for it, our Aſſent is inevitable. But if we neither comprehend it our ſelves, nor ſee God's Authority for it, and yet ſwallow it, this is *Credulity*, and not *divine Faith*, which can have nothing leſs than *divine Truth* for its Object. When we are ſure that God Almighty ſpeaks to us, we readily believe him, who cannot lie, nor be miſtaken, nor deceive us: But when Men ſpeak, though from God himſelf, our Belief in them is but human Con-

fidence, if we have only their own Authority that they had it from God. Their being Biſhops, their being learned, their meeting together in Synods; all this alters not the Caſe: We can judge of their Opinions no otherwiſe than as of the Opinions of Men, and of their Deciſions, but as of human Deciſions.

When the Articles of any *Creed* appear to be contained in Scripture, whoever believes *that*, does in Conſequence believe *them*; and then ſuch Creed is unneceſſary: But when we cannot, or think we cannot, find them in Scripture, and yet give equal Credit to them, we depreciate and profane the divine Authority it ſelf, by accepting the Words of Man's Invention as wiſer and more ſignificant than the Words of God's own chuſing.

We are ſure that the Scripture Phraſes were inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, and as ſure that our own Forms and Injunctions are Human, and framed by Prieſts. It is therefore ſtrange, that the former ſhould be inſufficient and unintelligible, and the latter infallible, and to be embraced and obey'd on the pain of Damnation; and that the Prieſts muſt do what God Almighty has, without Succeſs, endeavoured to do.

Beſides, as the Impoſition of human Creeds is contrary to Reaſon, ſo is it alſo to Charity. They were generally made in a Paſſion, not to edify, but to plague thoſe for whom, or rather againſt whom, they were intended. They were the Engines of Wrath and Vengeance,

geance, nor could they ſerve any other Purpoſe. Thoſe who believed them already, did not want them; and thoſe who disbelieved them, were not the better for them. But this was not the worſt of it; for they who did not receive them againſt their Conſcience, were curs'd; and they who did, deſerved it. So that either the Wrath of God on one Hand, or the Wrath and Cruelty of the Clergy on the other, was unavoidable. If People ſaid they believed, and did not, they mocked God, and ſhipwrecked their Souls; and if they did not believe and owned it, though they ſaved their Souls, they provoked their Reverend Fathers, and were deſtroyed.

Whenever theſe Dictators in Faith had a Mind to be miſchievous, and to undo one who gave them ſignal Offence, either by his good Reputation, or good Biſhoprick, they began his Ruin by their great Care for his Soul; and ſo invented a Creed for him, which ruined him effectually, by giving him, as they ſaid, to Satan, but, in Truth, to Beggary, Stripes, or Flames. He therefore who had any Virtue or Religion, was a certain Sufferer by thoſe Syſtems of Faith, which were contrived for that Purpoſe. The Man that had no Conſcience nor Honeſty, was not worthy of their Anger; or, which is moſt likely, was on the Orthodox Side, or at leaſt quickly became a Convert to it, being, like themſelves, able to ſwallow any Thing.

So that Creeds, as they were the Reſult of Revenge, Pride, or Avarice, ſo were they the conſtant Preludes and Introductions to Ignorance, Cruelty and Blood; and the wretched Laity were craftily, as well as inhumanly, made the deluded and unnatural Inſtruments of Butchering one another, to prove the Infallibility of the Faith-Makers; who, while they were wantonly ſhedding Chriſtian Blood, and dooming to Damnation thoſe who called upon the Name of the true God, had the ſhameleſs Aſſurance to miſcal themſelves the Ambaſſadors of the meek Jeſus.

And indeed, what better could be expected from Men ſo choſen, ſo unqualify'd, and ſo intereſted, as the Members of theſe general Creed-making Councils for the moſt Part were? They were choſen from ſeveral Parts by a Majority of Votes; and they who were moſt aſpiring, factious or crafty, carried it. They ſprung from the meaneſt of the People: They were bred in Cells: They popped into the World without Experience or Breeding: They knew little of Mankind, and leſs of Government, and had not the common Qualifications of Gentlemen: They were governed by Paſſion, and led by Expectation: And, either eager for Preferment, or impatient of miſſing it, they were the perpetual Flatterers or Diſturbers of Princes.

Theſe were the Men, this their Character. When theſe Reverend Fathers were got together in a Body, by the Order of a Prince or

a Pope; who, having his Neceſſities, or the Ends of his Ambition to ſerve, choſe proper Tools for thoſe Purpoſes; they were directed to form ſuch Creeds and Syſtems of Faith, as his preſent Views or Intereſts made requiſite for Mankind to believe.

In this new Employment every Member, we may be ſure, was forward to ſhew his Talents in ſtarting new Tenets, or in contradicting thoſe already ſtarted, and ſo to make himſelf conſiderable enough for that Preferment which he was reſolved to earn one way or another. And this being the great Aim of them all, Jealouſies and hard Words were carried to the moſt violent Pitch. There was no End of their Wrangling and Reviling: Not content to abuſe each other by Word of Mouth, they ſometimes ſcolded in Writing; and every Reverend Father drew up a bitter *Billinſgate* Petition againſt another Reverend Father. Sometimes, not ſatisfied with Vollies of Scurrility, unheard of in Aſſemblies of Gentlemen, they had Recourſe to Club-Law, and made good their Inventions and Diſtinctions with Blows and Blood. And if the Truth could not be found out by Scolding, Contradiction, and Battle, it was not found out at all.

Thus any Emperor or Pope might have what Creed he pleaſed, provided he would be at the Pains and Price of it. And for the reſt of Mankind, they had this ſhort Choice, *To comply*, or be undone.

NUMBER VII.

Wedneſday, March 2. 1720.

Of Uninterrupted Succeſſion.

SINCE all the moſt idle and viſionary Pretences of the Popiſh and popiſhly-affected Clergy have their Ends, and their Danger, and therefore ſhould be narrowly watched, and vigorouſly oppoſed; I ſhall in this Paper enquire into the Validity of a principal Claim of theirs, I mean that of *Uninterrupted Succeſſion*; and endeavour to find whether there is any Foundation to ſupport this Corner-ſtone of their Authority, except in their own wild Imaginations.

One might reaſonably imagine, that a Doctrine of ſo much Importance to the temporal and eternal State of all Mankind, ſhould be expreſly laid down, and fully explained in the Holy Scriptures, to prevent all Poſſibility of Miſtake about it. But, inſtead of this, the Word, as far as I remember, is not once mentioned

tioned there, nor any other Word equivalent to it; ſo that we are under a Neceſſity of recurring to the Clergy themſelves for Information: And here too we are as much bewildered as before; for ſome of them boldly aſſert it, and others flatly deny it.

Beſides, thoſe who hate and damn one another, claim it equally to themſelves, and deny it to all others. Thoſe who are Succeſſors to the Apoſtles in *England*, diſown their Brother Succeſſors beyond the *Tweed* and about the *Lake*; and they their Brother Succeſſors at *Rome*; and they theirs at *Greece* and *Armenia*, as well as every where elſe. Now all theſe, who ſo confidently aſſume the Succeſſorſhip to themſelves alone, are as oppoſite to each other in Sentiments and Worſhip as Light is to Darkneſs. They cannot therefore all have it; and if only one has it, how ſhall we know who he is? No Man's Teſtimony ought to be taken in his own Caſe; and if we take that of other People, there are twenty to one againſt them all.

If the Clergy of the Church of *England* as by Law eſtabliſhed are, of all the Reformed, ſuppoſed to enjoy this Line of Entail entire to themſelves; pray how came they by it? Not from the *Reformation*, which began not till near fifteen Centuries after the Apoſtles were dead; and *Cranmer* owned Ordination *then* to be no more than a Civil Appointment to an Eccleſiaſtical Office. It is certain, at that Time this *Utopian* Succeſ-

ſion

ſion was not ſo much as thought of by any who embraced the Proteſtant Religion. At preſent, indeed, and for a good while paſt, the Jacobite High Clergy contend for it with equal Modeſty and Truth: But, in order to adopt it, they are forced to drop the *Reformation*: For,

You muſt know, courteous Reader, that this ſame Succeſſion is now deduced from *Rome*, and the Pope has had the Keeping of it; who, by all that adhered to the Reformation, was held to be *Antichriſt*, and the *Man of Sin*. He was often an Atheiſt, often an Adulterer, often a Murtherer, and always an Uſurper; and his Church has conſtantly lived in groſs Idolatry, and ſubſiſted by Ignorance, Frauds, Rapine, Cruelty, and all the blackeſt Vices. It is certain, ſhe was full of Wickedneſs and Abomination, and void of all Goodneſs and Virtue, but that of having kept the Apoſtolick Orders pure and undefiled for our modern High Church-men.

However, I think they themſelves ſeem to be now ſenſible, that it will be a difficult Matter to make out, this Way, their Kindred to the Apoſtles, without being nearer akin to Popery; they are therefore forced to own the Church of *Rome* to be a *true Church*. But, I would beg Leave to obſerve, that as there is no converſing here with a Chimney-ſweeper without catching ſome of his Soot; ſo we ought not to be ſurprized if, in ſucceeding to the Orders of that Church,

they

they alſo ſucceed to moſt of her good Qualities, and if the Liquor ſmells ſtrongly of the Cask. I confeſs, amongſt us Laymen, it would look a little abſurd, if any one ſhould gravely aſſert, 'That indeed *Lais* was a filthy 'Strumpet, and no virtuous Woman could 'converſe with her; but, for all that, ſhe 'was a *true Virgin*, and *all Chaſtity* was *de-'riv'd* from *her!*

But ſuch Abſurdities as theſe go for nothing amongſt ſome Sorts of Eccleſiaſticks. We will therefore, in the next Place, enquire what it is which they would ſucceed to. The Apoſtles had no Ambition, Juriſdiction, Dignities, or Revenues, to which they could be Succeſſors. We read not in Scripture one Word of Eccleſiaſtical Princes, Popes, Patriarchs, Primates, *&c.* On the contrary, our Saviour himſelf declares, that *his Kingdom is not of this World*; and when the young Man in the Goſpel (St. *Matth.* Ch. 19th) asked of him, *What he ſhould do to obtain eternal Life?* He anſwered, that, beſides keeping the Commandments, he ſhould *ſell all that he had, and give it to the Poor.* N. B. He did not bid him give a Penny to the Prieſts.*

In the 20th Chap. of the ſame Goſpel, our Saviour takes Notice to his Diſciples, that the *Princes of this World exerciſe Dominion over them*; but, ſays he, *it ſhall not be ſo amongſt YOU: But whoever will be great amongſt you, let him be your Miniſter; and whoever will be Chief, let him be your Servant.*

* If prieſts were poor he did not debar them. Nay, Who will now say that there are no poor prieſts?

Nay, he ſays that even the *Son of Man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter.* In the 23d Chap. he condems the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, for loving the *uppermoſt Rooms*, and the *chief Seats* in the *Synagogue*; and their deſiring to be called of Men, *Rabbi*; and he forbids all this Pride to his *Diſciples*, as well as his other Hearers; and orders them not to call one another *Maſter*, for one, ſays he, is *your Maſter, even Chriſt, and he that is greateſt among you ſhall be your Servant.* Nor do I find that while he was upon Earth, he laid Claim to any Power, but *to do the Will of him that ſent him.* Indeed, after his Reſurrection, he tells his Diſciples, that *all Power is given to him in Heaven and in Earth*; and he bids them teach it to all Nations, and baptize them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt; but he does not give them the leaſt Power, or Dominion, of any Kind whatſoever.

And it is plain that his Diſciples underſtood him ſo. St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, in his 2d Epiſtle to them, *Chap.* 1. that they had not *Dominion over their Faith*, but *were Helpers of their Joy.* In the fourth Chap. of the ſame Epiſtle, he tells them, that *they preach not themſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus their Lord, and themſelves* THEIR *Servants for Jeſus ſake.* In the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, Chap. 3. he admoniſhes them *not to glory in Men*, no not in himſelf, nor *Apollos*, nor *Cephas*; and tells the People, that even the

the Apoſtles themſelves, and all Things are THEIRS, and they are Chriſt's, *and Chriſt is God's.* In the 9th Chapter he tells them, that tho' he is free from all Men, yet he has made himſelf SERVANT unto all, that he might gain the more. St. *Peter* alſo, in his firſt Epiſtle, *Chap.* v. exhorts the Elders to *feed* the *Flock* of *Chriſt*, and to take the Overſight thereof, not by *Conſtraint*, but *willingly*; not for *filthy Lucre*, but of a *ready Mind*; neither as being LORDS *over God's Heritage*, but as being *Examples to the Flock.*

Now either theſe Elders were Clergymen, or they were not: If they were Clergymen, their pretended Succeſſors may ſee upon what Terms they are to be *Feeders* and *Overſeers* of the *Flock of Chriſt:* But, if they were only Laymen, then it is plain that no other Qualifications were neceſſary to a *Spiritual Shepherd*, than a willing, diſintereſted, and humble Mind; and all Subjection is, in the 5th Verſe, commanded to be reciprocal — *Likewiſe, ye Younger, ſubmit your ſelves to the Elders: Yea, all of you be ſubject to one another, and be cloathed with Humility; for God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.*

For my ſelf, I confeſs that I am not Maſter enough of any Language to find Words more expreſſive, or which can more fully renounce all Sorts of Juriſdiction and Dominion, than thoſe in the Paſſages which I have here quoted: And nothing can be more ridi-

ridiculous, as well as impious, than to oppoſe them with equivocal, doubtful, and figurative Expreſſions. If the Popiſh Prieſts could but find out one ſuch clear Text on their Side, how would they gallop away on the Ridge of it, till they had rode themſelves out of Breath, and the Laity out of their Senſes and their Eſtates!

As I have made it fully appear, that the Apoſtles underſtood our Saviour in this Senſe; ſo it is evident, that the firſt Chriſtians had not the leaſt Apprehenſion that the Apoſtles claimed any Power or Authority to themſelves. They were poor Men, of mean and mechanical Profeſſions, who left Fathers, Mothers, Children, Families, Trades, and renounced all the good Things of this World, to wander about it, and preach Chriſt. Their Diſintereſtedneſs and Sufferings were powerful Arguments of the Truth of their Doctrines: Whereas, if they had told their Hearers, in the modern High-Church Strain, that "as ſoon as they became our Converts, they "became alſo their *Spiritual Subjects*; That "they themſelves were *Eccleſiaſtical Princes*; and that *Spiritual Government was as much more Excellent than the Civil, as Heaven was than Earth, yea much more ſo; That the Epiſcopal Honour, and ſublime Dignity, could not be equalled by the Glory of Kings, and the Diadems of Princes; That Kings and Queens ought to bow down to the Prieſts with their Face towards the Earth, and lick up the Duſt of their Feet*—with whole Volumes

Volumes more of ſuch blaſphemous Traſh, as is vended by Dr. *Hickes*, Mr. *Leſlie*, and indeed by almoſt all the High-Church Writers; and yet not publickly diſapproved or cenſured by the *Convocation*, or any *Body* of the Clergy, tho' they have ſhewn an outrageous Enmity to all who have aſſerted the contrary Principles. If the Apoſtles had told them too, that they themſelves had a Right, not only to the Tenth Part of their Eſtates, but of their Labour, and that ſince *they* (their Hearers) *adminiſtered ſo many Things to a King, who adminiſters Peace and War for Bodily Safety; how ought they not to adminiſter more liberally to him, who adminiſters the Prieſthood towards God, and ſecures both Body and Soul by his Prayers?*

I ſay, if any of this choice Fuſtian had been broach'd to the World, at the firſt Opening of the Goſpel, what Progreſs could Chriſtianity have made? How could the Apoſtles have been diſintereſted Witneſſes of the Truth of the Doctrines, which gave them ſuch Juriſdiction, Dominion and Riches? And how juſtly would the Princes and Powers of the Earth have puniſhed ſuch Uſurpations upon their Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Authority?

The Silence alone of the Enemies to Chriſtianity, is a ſufficient Confutation of this wicked and black Calumny, caſt upon them by their pretended Succeſſors; but which their bittereſt Oppoſers had more Modeſty than to charge them with, tho' they ran-

ſack'd Earth and Hell for all other Sorts of Scandal.

NUMBER VIII.

Wedneſday, March 9. 1720.

Of Uninterrupted Succeſſion. *Part* 2.

DR. *Tillotſon*, in his Sermon againſt *Tranſubſtantiation*, tells us, that "it "might well ſeem ſtrange if any "Man ſhould write a Book to "prove that an Egg is not an Elephant, "and that a Muſquet Bullet is not a Pike." He might have added, that this was the hard Circumſtance the Laity were reduced to in their Diſputes about Religion with moſt Sets of Eccleſiaſticks; and, what is ſtill worſe, when they had proved theſe Things, they were never the better.

The greateſt Part of Mankind have learned to judge of Religious Matters, by other Faculties and Senſes than thoſe which God Almighty has given them. The firſt Thing they are taught is, that Reaſon may be on one

one Side of the Queſtion, and Truth on the other; which Maxim being well eſtabliſh'd, there will be an End of all Reaſoning ever after, and there can be no Criterion between Truth and Falſhood: But thoſe, who, by Education and Cuſtom, have once got Poſſeſſion of their Superſtition and Fears, may impoſe upon them what crafty and advantageous Doctrines they pleaſe.

By theſe Means the Chriſtian Religion, moſt eaſy and intelligible in it ſelf, and adapted to the meaneſt Capacities, is become, in moſt Countries, a Metaphyſical Science, made up of uſeleſs Subtilties, and inſignificant Diſtinctions; calculated to gratify the Pride of corrupt Clergymen, by making them admired and reverenced by the People, for their profound Knowledge and deep Learning; and conſequently Religion is wholly left to their Care and Conduct, as being infinitely above poor *Lay-Apprehenſions*. And to this, the World is beholding for the Depravation of Virtue and Morality; and for all the Domination, Pomp and Riches of the Popiſh Prieſthood.

Therefore, I hope no one will condemn an Undertaking intended to reſtore Chriſtianity to its Primitive Innocence, and Native Simplicity; to oppoſe Common Senſe againſt Pompous Nonſenſe, and Learned Abſurdity; and to ſhew how, and in what Meaning, *The Kingdom of Heaven is ſaid to be revealed to Babes and Sucklings, and hid from the*

Learned and Wise: That is to say, it is easily learned and known by those, who make Use of their Natural Faculties, and Uncorrupted Reason; but will always be hid from such, who hunt after it in the Schools of the Philosophers, or in any ambitious and factious Assemblies and Synods of Popish Ecclesiasticks. I shall therefore endeavour to keep this plain and easy Subject clear of all vain Philosophy and Metaphysical Gibberish, with which the Adversaries always attempt to entangle it; as knowing well, that if they can but make it Unintelligible, their Authority alone will decide every Question in their own Favour.

As I conceive I have fully shewn, in my last Paper, that the Apostles claimed no Jurisdiction, Authority, or Coercive Power, of any Kind whatsoever, over their Hearers; but only obey'd the Will of their Master, in delivering a Message from Heaven, for the infinite Benefit of Mankind; and to prove their Mission, brought their Credentials, namely, *The Power of doing Miracles*, along with them: So I shall shew, that what Power they had, (except that which was miraculous, and died with them;) or, to speak more properly, *what Right* they had to perform the Duties and Offices of Christianity, did not descend to one Christian more than another; but that all were empowered alike to exercise alike the Functions of their most Holy Religion.

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When a Command is given from God to Men, to do and perform any Action, it is not only the Right of every One, but it becomes his Duty, to execute it himſelf, when he is capable of doing it; unleſs the Precept directs ſome other Manner of Performance: And whoever aſſerts that it does, is oblig'd to prove it. And he muſt not be ſurprized, if in a Caſe of this great Conſequence, we ſhall expect plain and direct Texts, deſcribing the Extent of the Power demanded, and the Perſons to whom it is given. It will not do his Buſineſs to pick up Two or Three ſcatter'd and disjointed Sentences, and putting them upon the Rack, torture them till they confeſs what they never meant, againſt the whole Current of Scripture. It muſt be laid down plainly and directly, and made obvious to the meaneſt Capacities; not depending upon the Criticiſms of *Rabbinical* Learning; nor ſublimated from *Jewiſh* and *Heathen* Traditions; nor extorted from doubtful, equivocal, and unintelligible Expreſſions. It is not conſiſtent with the Goodneſs of God, to ſuffer a Power, upon which the Being of Chriſtianity, and the Temporal and Eternal Happineſs of all the World depends, to remain in Obſcurity and Darkneſs: and therefore we may be ſure, that whatever of this Kind does ſo, is the Invention of ambitious and wicked Men, and not the Will of the great and good God.

It will be incumbent on them to ſhew one clear and direct Text, where our Saviour confines the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments to any Set of Men whatſoever. The contrary of which is ſo evident, that there is not in Scripture one Inſtance where the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper was ever adminiſtred by any One, who, in our Tranſlation of the *New Teſtament*, is ſtiled *Biſhop* or *Presbyter*. And it is as plain, that the Right of Baptizing belonged to all Chriſtians equally. Both which, I ſhall make out unanſwerably hereafter, in ſeparate Papers. I ſhall alſo ſhew that the *Demagorgon*, or boaſted Power of Excommunication, is nothing elſe but a Liberty which every Man has over his own Actions, in converſing or mingling with what Society he pleaſes; or, at moſt, only a Precept or Exhortation, not to keep ill Company, and to remove ſuch, or ſeparate from them.

But to proceed with my Subject: If a Chain of Uninterrupted Succeſſion had been neceſſary, an Uninterrupted Courſe of Talents, Grace and Abilities, ſuperior to thoſe of all other *Lay-Chriſtians*, had been neceſſary alſo, to have made the Clergy reſemble thoſe whom they were to ſucceed in an Employment which required the higheſt. But there is no ſuch peculiar Genius or Virtue found amongſt them. They are qualify'd by Means evidently Human for this Divine Calling. They are ſent to Schools and Univerſities to learn

learn to be Succeſſors to the Apoſtles: (I will not ſay of them, what Mr. *Dodwell* ſays of the *Jewiſh* Prieſts, *that they make uſe of Wine, amongſt other Bodily Helps, to obtain the prophetick Spirit*:) And all who have the ſame Senſe and Opportunities, thrive at leaſt as faſt as thoſe who are Candidates for the Prieſthood; and might, if they pleaſed, apply their Learning to the ſame Uſes. And as to Grace, Piety and Humanity, I think verily the Modeſty of the Clergy will not let them pretend to excel their Lay Neighbours in thoſe Endowments.

The Apoſtles were inſpired, had the Gift of working Miracles, could beſtow the Holy Ghoſt, and had the Diſcernment of Spirits; and were conſequently proper Judges of Mens Fitneſs for the Miniſtry, and could confer that Fitneſs. Our Modern Divines are not inſpired, cannot work Miracles, nor give the Holy Ghoſt; nor can many of them even find out their own Spirit, ſo far are they from diſcerning that of other People.

The Apoſtles were a Set of extraordinary Perſons, appointed by the Son of God to convert all Nations, and had extraordinary Endowments given them for that End. Their pretended Succeſſors are a Race of very ordinary Men, poſſeſs'd of no extraordinary Abilities; ſent by no Divine Authority; nor to convert any Nation; but only take up a Trade to get a Livelihood.

Chriſt's Apoſtles were Pen-Men of the Holy Ghoſt, and writ Books of Scripture:

But, pray, what New Goſpel do our Modern Apoſtles give us? (I wiſh None of them had ever confounded the Old!) They are at beſt but Note-Makers and Commentators; in which Characters Laymen have ſucceeded as well, even by their own Acknowledgment.

Minellius and *Gronovius* have written Notes upon *Virgil* and *Livy*: Pray, are they Succeſſors to *Virgil* and *Livy*, for that Reaſon? And are the ſtupid *Dutch* Commentators Succeſſors to the great *Roman Orator*, becauſe they have ſlept over his Works, and darken'd them with Illuſtrations? Or is every One who ſails to *America* for *Gain*, a ſucceſſor to *Chriſtopher Columbus*, who diſcovered and pointed out the Way to the *New World?*

The great Buſineſs and Commiſſion of the Apoſtles, was to convert Mankind. Now, I would be glad to know how they can be ſucceeded in a Thing, which could be done but once; and in Countries, where it is already done: I mean, the converting of a Nation, ſuppoſe *Greece*, *England*, or any other. What muſt the *Jews* have thought of a Set of hair-brained *Iſraelites*, who would have demanded of them vaſt Reſpect and Revenues, for ſucceeding *Moſes* in redeeming them from Captivity to *Pharoah*, and for leading them every Day of their Lives out of the Land of *Ægypt*, Seventeen Hundred Years after they had left it? Or could any Number of *Jews* ſucceed *Nehemiah* in bringing back the Captive Tribes from *Perſia* and *Babylon*?

Can

Can any one ſucceed the Duke of *Marlborough*, in fighting the Battle of *Hochtſted*, and relieving the *German Empire?* I preſume, every Foot-Soldier is not a Succeſſor to *Alexander the Great*; nor every Serjeant of the Guards deſcended in a *Military Line* from *Julius Cæſar*.

N. B. Having ſhewn that the Apoſtles have left no Succeſſors, there is an End of the Queſtion, Whether their No-Succeſſion is interrupted, or not? But my Reſpect to the High Clergy obliging me to give them all Advantages, I will, in ſome future Paper, admit that ſuch a Succeſſion had once a Being; and then will undeniably prove that it has been frequently, I may almoſt ſay conſtantly, interrupted and broken, under all thoſe Heads which they make neceſſary to the Continuance of it.

NUMBER IX.

Wedneſday, March 16. 1720.

Of the Clearneſs *of* Scripture.

I Shall in this Paper endeavour to confirm what I have ſaid in my laſt; by ſhewing, that God Almighty, in revealing his Will to Mankind, has always taken effectual Care that it could not be miſtaken, and therefore made it ſo plain, as to need no farther Explanation, in all Things which are neceſſary for us to know.

When God would have his Pleaſure known to Men, it is agreeable to his Goodneſs to make it evident; when he would not, it is agreeable to his Wiſdom to make it impenetrable. Scripture was not given to make work for Interpreters; nor to teach Men how to doubt, but how to live. The Holy Spirit has made undeniably clear and manifeſt all thoſe Precepts which enjoin Faith and Obedience, which

which are the great Points of Religion; and weak Men cannot correct him, and do it better themſelves.

I think it is generally granted, that Revelations are no more, and that Prophecy hath ceaſed. The Reaſon given for this, I take to be a very good one; namely, that God has already ſufficiently diſcovered his Mind to Men, and made his Meaning manifeſt. If it were otherwiſe, we ſhould doubtleſs have his extraordinary Preſence ſtill; but as we have not, it is to be preſumed there is no Occaſion. He appeared himſelf whilſt Men were in Darkneſs; but now that he hath ſhewn them his *marvellous Light*, he appears no more. His Preſence is ſupplied by his Word; which being addreſſed to all Men equally, and not to *one Tribe of Men* to interpret it for the reſt, it follows, that all Men have in their Power the Means to underſtand it. *Old Revelation* therefore does not want the Aſſiſtance of *New*, nor has the Omnipotent any need of *Prolocutors*.

While God is delivering his Law to the World, he is plain even to Exactneſs; and his Orders are full and circumſtantial, even about the minuteſt Points. This is eminently proved by his Manner of giving Laws to the *Jews*. Every Ceremony, and every Inſtrument and Garment, uſed in their Worſhip, is preciſely deſcribed and directed. The Trumpets, the Candleſticks, the Lamps, the Spoons, the Snuffers, are all of his own Appointment,

both

both as to the Materials and the Uſe of them. He makes it impoſſible to miſtake him. He calls the Prieſts by their Names, points out their Perſons, and ſhews them every Branch of their Office. He limits and governs their Behaviour while they are about it; and does not leave it to *their* Wiſdom to invent ſuch Poſtures and Ceremonies, as *they* think fit to call *decent* and *ſignificant*. They had not the Privilege to chuſe their own Garments. *Moſes*, who was the *Civil Magiſtrate*, had it in his Charge to *Sanctify* and *Conſecrate* their Perſons: Their Buſineſs in the Sacrifices, is pointed out to them: They are to put their Hands upon the Head of the Beaſt, and to receive its Blood, and to make Fires. They are not, as I remember, once made uſe of to ſpeak God's Mind to his People; *that* is the Duty and Commiſſion of the *Civil Magiſtrate*, and *Moſes* performs it. They had not the leaſt Hand in the Celebrating of the *Paſſover*, the *Jewiſh Sacrament*, to which ours of the *Lord's Supper* hath, it is ſaid, ſucceeded: And as little were they employed in that other of *Circumciſion*, the reputed Anceſtor of *Baptiſm*. In ſhort, their whole Function was to be *Servants* and Journeymen in the *Houſe of Sacrifice*.

If Almighty God was thus punctual and particular in the Rituals and Outſide of his Worſhip, can we imagine that he was defective or obſcure, in declaring the more weighty Points of the Law? No — When our firſt

 Parents

Parents broke the Covenant, they did it wilfully, and could not pretend that they understood it not; *Of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it*, was all the Injunction that was laid upon them: And there was no need of a Commentator here. The Text might have been rendered more perplext, but not more plain.

The Covenant which he made with *Abraham* was not leſs clear: He was to *be the God of* Abraham *and of his Seed*; and *every Male of his Race, and thoſe that were bought with Money, were to be circumciſed.* There were no more Words to this Contract; and the Patriarch and his Iſſue had but one ſhort Syſtem of Divinity, moſt intelligible of it ſelf, and in no wiſe darkened with Gloſſes.

The Decalogue, or the Law of the Ten Commandments, delivered by God himſelf from *Mount Sinai*, with great Glory and aſtoniſhing Circumſtances, was little elſe but the Law of Nature reduced into Tables, and expreſſed in Words of God's own chuſing: And they were worthy of the Omnipotent and Infallible Author; for they were ſo plain and indiſputable, that not a ſingle Perſon of all the Twelve Tribes, ſo addicted on other Occaſions to Contradiction and Wrangling, ſo much as pretended not to underſtand them: Nor was there one Man, much leſs a *Body of Men*, ſet apart to explain them.

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When God ſpoke to the *Jews* by his Prophets, the ſame Method of Clearneſs was obſerved. The Admonitions given, and the Judgments denounced, were adapted to the Capacity of every one concerned. The *Jews*, it is true, did not often believe them, at leaſt not mind them; but it was never pleaded that they did not comprehend them. God inſpired, and the Prophets ſpake, and all underſtood; but neither *Creeds* nor *Paraphraſes* were made, for they were not neceſſary. At laſt, indeed, the *Prieſts* and *Phariſees made void the Word of God by their Traditions, and* very rigidly *tithing Mint and Cummin, neglected the greater Things of the Law, and taught for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* But we know what Thanks and Character they had for their Pains from the Saviour of the World, and what a terrible Doom he pronounced againſt them. Read the 23d Chapter of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, and ſee the Deſcription of theſe vile Hypocrites, and then conſider whether they be at this Day without Heirs or Succeſſors. Indeed it ſeems to me to be the only Succeſſion which has not been interrupted.

The Goſpel, when it came, as it was to excel all other Laws in its Ends and Uſefulneſs, ſo was it the ſhorteſt and plaineſt Inſtitution in the World. It only added the Duty of Faith to that of good Works, which was the great, if not the only, Buſineſs of the Moral Law. To believe that *Jeſus Chriſt*

was

was the only Son of God, was the great Principle of the Chriſtian Religion. Nor was the Practice of this Belief attended with the leaſt Difficulty, ſince our Saviour proved his Miſſion and Omnipotence, by Miracles that were undeniable and convincing. For the Truth of them he appealed to Men's Senſes, and there was neither Myſtery nor Jugling in his Actions, nor did they want any Body to explain them.

All this is further confirmed by the Conduct of the Apoſtles. The conſtant Driſt and Tenour of their Lives and Preaching, was to perſwade Mankind to believe in *Jeſus Chriſt*. In order to which they worked Miracles, and gave the Holy Ghoſt. The Precept was thus ſhort, and the Motives to comply with it were thus irreſiſtible. Hence it was, that ſometimes Thouſands were convinced in a Moment, without either *Commentaries*, or *Creeds*, or *Catechiſms*. And indeed who could avoid believing a Propoſition that proved it ſelf?

The Apoſtles, when they had converted one City, did not ſtay to eſtabliſh a Hierarchy there only, and to tell the *ſame Thing* over and over again to thoſe that knew it already: No, — when they had planted the Faith in one Place, they travelled to another, and preached the Goſpel to the unconverted World; leaving thoſe already converted, to perform Chriſtian Worſhip *their own Way*. If they believed in Chriſt, and lived ſoberly, the

Apoſtles

Apoſtles deſired no more. Thoſe were the *Two Things needful*; nor were they more needful than clear.

In this plain manner did God Almighty always diſcover himſelf and his Will, whenever he diſpenſed his Laws to the World. On the other Hand, while he hid himſelf from the Heathen World, did their Prieſts ever diſcover him? No,—they had Deities without Number; They worſhipped Stocks and Stones, Trees, Rivers, Bulls, Serpents, Monkeys and Garlick. Both their Religion and their Gods were of the Prieſts making, and therefore we may be ſure they were hopeful Ones. They created their Deities *after their own Likeneſs*; angry, cruel, covetous and luſtful. Their Myſteries were full of Horror, Obſceneneſs, Craft and Deluſion. The Will of their God was ſearched in the Guts and Ordure of dead Beaſts, and a Coop of Chickens were his Privy Councillors. His Favour or Diſpleaſure depended upon their Craws; if they had puny Stomacks, the God was in a Fit of the Spleen; if ravenous, he was in a giving Humour, and would grant you any Thing, even to the Cutting of the Throats of a whole Army, or Burning of a City, or Plundering a Province: And when he was tired of his Kindneſs to you, he would perhaps in a Day or Two, do all this for your Enemy.

Upon the whole, when Almighty God reveals his Will, he does it effectually; but

when

when he disguises it in dark and doubtful Expressions, it is plain the Time of making himself *further* known to Men, is not yet come, and it is in vain for them to pry into his Secrets.

The all-merciful Being does never require of us, that which we cannot find he requires. It is not consistent with his Wisdom and Goodness, to make that necessary which he hath not made plain. He has with the greatest Perspicuity, described the Candlesticks, Tongs, and other *Tools* of Worship under the *Jewish* Law; and yet in the Gospel has not said one Word of some Doctrines, which we are told are necessary to Salvation. Altars and Priests are divinely appointed in the *Old Dispensation*, but are neither directed nor described in the *New*; and yet we know of what Importance they are at present in the *Popish Church* and *elsewhere*. The Priest's Office is particularized and circumscribed, even to the Killing of a Goat, or a Pair of Pigeons; and yet under the Gospel it is not so much as hinted, that a Priest shall administer either of the Sacraments; though, if we will take their own Words for it, there can be no Sacrament without them. In the *Levitical* Law, the *Sons of Levi* are expresly appointed to be Priests continually; but it is not once said in the Christian Law, that there must be an uninterrupted Race of Bishops, or Popes, or Priests, to the End of the World; and that there can be no Church where it

is not; tho', if this had been needful, it must have been particularized: So essential a Part of the Christian Religion, and so absolutely necessary to every Man's Salvation, could never have been wholly omitted, or so much as left in Doubt.

As by the Law of *Moses*, the Priest's Office and Duty were minutely described, so their Maintenance was ascertained: But by the Law of Christ, there is not any Priesthood at all appointed, (as I shall fully make out hereafter) and consequently no certain Provision made for them. It is indeed said, that *The Labourer is worthy of his Hire*; and I acknowledge it is fit that those who hire them should pay them: But sure this Text leaves every one at Liberty to chuse his own *Labourer*, and to make as good a Bargain as he can, or to do his own Business himself. What Pretence is there of a Divine Right to just a Tenth Part; and not only of our Estates, but of our Stock and Industry too, which in some Corn Lands comes to Double the Rent that the Landlord receives?

The *Tribe of Levi* amongst the *Jews* were the Twelfth Tribe of *Israel*, and, in the Division of the Lands, had a Right to the Twelfth Share, without any Regard had to their Priestly Office; and consequently were allowed but a very small Proportion towards their *Hire*, and much less than, I doubt, their pretended Successors would be satisfy'd with. I would therefore, as a sincere

cere Friend to their Order, recommend to their Conſideration, whether it would not be moſt adviſeable, to quit their Divine Right, and be even content with the Laws of the Land.

NUMBER X.

Wedneſday, March 23. 1720.

Of ORDINATION.

I Take Honeſty and Knowledge to be the eſſential Talents requir'd for the Work of the Miniſtry: The One is acquired by Study, and the Other depends upon the Diſpoſition of the Heart, or the Grace of God. Therefore he, who has a Capacity to Teach and Edify, has a Right to do Both.

Thoſe who are Candidates for the Prieſthood, carry their Qualifications along with them; and having paſſed Examination, receive a Power from the Biſhop, which he receives from the Law, to put theſe Qualifications in Practice. But, if upon Trial, they

are found insufficient, they are, or ought to be rejected.

A Physician does not receive from the College an Ability to practice; but only a Declaration that he already has it. Such a Declaration are *Holy Orders:* They convey nothing; neither Righteousness, nor Learning, nor Wisdom. They are only a Diploma or Privilege to exercise a certain Calling, during Good Behaviour. Any further than this, what signifies the Hand of a Bishop laid upon the Head of a Stripling, who seeks Promotion or a Livelihood? If that Hand puts any Thing into that Head, I would ask what it is, and how does it appear? What Alteration for the Better is to be found in the Person, or Endowments, or Spirit of the Party Ordained? How does it appear that he has any Moral Sufficiency, which he had not before? Or any Spiritual Gift, besides that which he carries Home in his Pocket; and which was *confer'd* by the *Bishop's Secretary* for a *Fee?* Can there be any new Ability or Character without some Marks of it? Or is there an Alteration without a Change? It is an unconceivable Mystery to me, that the *same Man* should be *another Man*! I have known many a Man's Pride swell, and his Morals decay, after Orders; but very seldom his Manners or his Capacity enriched by them. He who has the Spirit, will do the Works of the Spirit: *By their Fruits ye shall know them.* The Thing, were it true, is very capable of

Proof.

Proof. Indeed, it could not be hid nor disputed. On the contrary, when neither the Heart is mended, nor the Understanding enlightened, it is manifest that the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with either of them.

A Learned and Virtuous Layman can instruct more effectually, and pray more devoutly and successfully, than an ignorant and profane Priest; and is consequently a more proper and secure Guide to others. To say that he has no Call, is no more than to say that he has not *enter'd his Name*: Besides, it is false; for I will lay it down as a Proposition which I will abide by, that *He who has a Power to do Good, has a Call to do Good*; and the promoting of Virtue, and securing of Souls, is doing the greatest Good of all. St. *James* tells us, that *the effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much*; but he does not say that he must be *in Orders*, or that he must perform the same in a consecrated Place: Tho' the Convocation, in the latter part of the Queen's Reign, thought fit to differ with the Apostle in this Point.

Apollos, without any Call at all, but from his own Abilities, *being an Eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures*, and instructed in *the Way of the Lord, and fervent in the Spirit, spake and taught diligently the Things of the Lord, and boldly in the Synagogue*. It is plain he was not *Ordained*, unless it was by the Tent-Maker and his Wife, *Aquilla* and *Priscilla*: And that he had not the Holy

Ghoſt, is alſo plain, for that he *knew only the Baptiſm of* John; and ſo *they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the Way of God more perfectly.* (Acts xviii. 4, &c.)

I doubt the Holy Ghoſt is too often made free with in Popiſh Countries, upon the Occaſion of young Mens taking Orders. I believe it will be found that their Motives are much more Temporal. It is conſider'd as a ſecular Employment, as much as any other; and the Labour of a Clergyman is as evidently Bought and Sold, as that of an Attorney or any Tradeſman. Beſides, the Way to this Calling is eaſy and obvious: Where is the Difficulty of learning a little *Greek*, or chopping a little Logick, and of getting by Heart a few Queſtions in School-Divinity? Nay, there are many Ordained there, even without any of theſe momentous Accompliſhments.

There are ſome who take the Orders of Clergymen, and yet never exerciſe the Function of Clergymen, either thro' Idleneſs, or Weakneſs. Does the Holy Ghoſt call Men to the Work of the Miniſtry, not to do the Work of the Miniſtry? Or does he call Men to an Office, without giving them Gifts and Grace to perform it? It was not ſo in the Apoſtles Days, when God inſpired all whom he ſent; and where the Divine Commiſſion or Call was given, *a Door of Utterance* was alſo given. But there were then no *Sine Cures*, no great Revenues; no great Doctors, nor ſmall Curates,

It

It is evident, that neither the Church of *Rome* in general, nor any of its Biſhops in particular, believe a Word of this pretended Call of the Holy Ghoſt, in the Buſineſs of taking Orders. For, by the Canons, the Perſon demanding Ordination, is to be examined as to his Capacity for the Miniſtry, and muſt produce a Certificate as to the Innocence and Morality of his Life; both which were unneceſſary, if there was any Proof or Aſſurance of his Call from God. And the Queſtions asked him upon that Occaſion, are ſuch as demand no more than ordinary Human Aid to anſwer them. Nor is it at all expected of him that the Goodneſs of his Life ſhould exceed that of other Laymen: If it is as good, it is well.

Whenever the Holy Ghoſt was given, it was given upon ſome extraordinary Occaſion, for the doing of ſome extraordinary Action; as it was to the Apoſtles, for converting the Heathen World. *They* ſhewed the Power which they had, by the Wonders which they did; and gave effectual Evidences that they were divinely aſſiſted. But ſome modern Prieſts, who have no extraordinary Work to do, aſſert, notwithſtanding, that they have an extraordinary Call from the Spirit; which would alſo infer his extraordinary Aſſiſtance. But they ſay it without ſhewing it, and pretend to it without proving it. It is a Happineſs that we are not obliged to take their Word; for tho' *Faith* it

ſelf be *the Evidence of Things not ſeen*, yet ſtill it is the *Evidence*; that is, Proof muſt precede Belief.

When the Popiſh Clergy are charged with Frailties, Vices and Immoralities, they then confeſs the Truth, and are pleaſed to become Fleſh and Blood as well as other Men, and ſubject to the like Infirmities and Paſſions; and if they ſaid *greater*, we could readily believe them. But when a Point of Gain or Dominion is to be contended for, they grow all of a ſudden more than Men; They are then the *Lord's Ambaſſadours*, *Succeſſors to the Apoſtles*, *a Sacred Society*; and the Lord knows how many more fine Things. Now this Management is very unlucky for them, and full of palpable Contradiction; for if they had a greater Share of God's Grace and Spirit than others, it would be eſpecially evident in the ſuperior Piety of their Lives, ſince Holineſs is ſhewn in Practice: Whereas the Spirit of this World manifeſts it ſelf in the Love of Power and Wealth; and hence thoſe who purſue them are called *Worldly-minded*, in Oppoſition to God's *Elect*, who are the *Spiritual-minded*. I need not recommend it to ſuch Clergy, which to chuſe, *Carnal Minds* with Riches and Authority, or *Heavenly-Mindedneſs* without them. It is certain that the Apoſtles were *as pious as poor*.

If by the Call of the Holy Ghoſt, on this Occaſion, be meant no more than a ſerious and

and devout Bent of Mind to adminiſter in the Publick Worſhip of God, as ſome Reverend Divines, Lovers of Truth, do, I think, confeſs; then is the Claim of a Divine Miſſion and ſucceſſive Right utterly at an End; and the taking of Orders is no more than taking a Licence to perform a religious Office, for which every religious intelligent Man is already qualify'd.

And indeed ſuch a Man is, without the Conſent of any Biſhop, entitled to be a Paſtor, in the Scripture Senſe of the Word, tho' not to receive the *legal Wages* of a Paſtor. He may preach and pray, and deliver the Sacrament, when Temporal Laws do not reſtrain him; but cannot take Tithes, which are annexed to certain Conditions and Opinions eſtabliſhed by the State. As every State has its own Religion, ſo almoſt every Religion is directed and modelled by ſome State; and therefore they, who are Orthodox Conformiſts in one, are often Schiſmatical Diſſenters in another. But ſuch is the ſingular Modeſty and Submiſſion of the Clergy, that they, in moſt Countries, humbly acquieſce in the eſtabliſhed Faith; and not only meekly accept of all the Eccleſiaſtical Power and Revenues to themſelves, but gratefully condeſcend to perſecute all thoſe Conſciences that are not as complaiſant and ſupple as their own. And indeed, it is but generous in them to be zealous for thoſe Notions and Ceremonies,

which

which bring them Reverence and Hire: But methinks it is a little unreaſonable to expect that others ſhould, without *their* Motives, adopt *their* Zeal.

P. S. Having in my laſt Paper aſſerted, that *there is no particular Prieſthood at all directed by the New Teſtament*; I am told it is from thence ſurmized by ſome, thro' Malice, and by others, thro' Miſtake, that I do by this inſinuate, that there is therefore no Occaſion for any Church-Miniſtry whatſoever, notwithſtanding my former Declarations upon this Head. I particularly ſay in my Third Paper, ſpeaking of the Clergy:

'Their Office is evidently adapted to promote the Welfare of Human Nature, and 'to propagate its Peace and Proſperity in 'this World, as well as its eternal Felicity 'in the next; ſo that it is the Intereſt of all 'Men to honour it: and none but a Madman 'will condemn and ridicule what has a mani-'feſt Tendency to the Security and Happi-'neſs of all Mankind.

I ſay alſo in my Fourth Paper, that *I ſincerely think their Office to be abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace and Happineſs of Society.* I could likewiſe refer to other Paſſages. But to give full Satisfaction once for all, to ſuch as will be ſatisfy'd, I declare that I do only contend for the Right of every National and Voluntary Society to appoint their own Paſtors, and to judge of their Doctrines and Be-

Behaviour: Further than this I have no Aim: Nor do I desire to lessen the Respect due to the Clergy from their Merit and Usefulness; or the Dignities, Privileges and Revenues which they derive from the Law, or from the good Will and Contributions of the People. And I intend very soon to defend the Church of *England* upon the Principles and Authority of the Scripture and the Law; as well as the Toleration granted to Dissenters by the same Law, and the same Scripture.

NUMBER XI.

Wednesday, March 30. 1720.

The Advantageous Situation *of the* Clergy, *strangely inconsistent with their common* Cry *of* Danger.

VIRTUE and Innocence were created naked and undisguised; nor did our first Parents cover themselves till they had offended. Truth can never sin, and therefore need not, and ought

ought not, ever to appear in Maſquerade: She is moſt amiable when moſt uncovered; and appears truly Majeſtick, and in greateſt Luſtre, when diſrobed of all gaudy and affected Ornaments: Her Natural Features want no Varniſh or Colouring, nor has ſhe any need of Dreſſers and Tire-Women.

Knavery and Deformity alone want Daubing and Diſguiſe. Actors do not care that any one ſhould look into the Tiring-Room, nor Juglers or Sharpers into their Hands or Boxes: Whereas Honeſty and Sincerity appear always barefaced, and ſhew themſelves moſt in open Day; they ſcorn all indirect Advantages, and borrowed Helps, but truſt alone to their own native Beauty and intrinſick Strength: The Lion is never known to uſe Cunning.

I confeſs, that I am not Maſter enough of my Temper to avoid Laughter, and Indignation, by Turns, at the noiſy Clamours of the High Clergy, againſt the Freedom of the Age, and the Liberty of the Preſs; as if Virtue was inconſiſtent with Good Senſe, or Truth could ſuffer by Knowledge, or Religion by a free and thorough Examination. What Figure would a grave Lawyer make in *Weſtminſter-Hall*, if, after he had been tiring his Auditors for Two Hours together, he ſhould deſire the Judges not to hear the Counſel of the other Side, leſt they ſhould perplex the Cauſe and miſlead the Court.

Every

Every Stander-by would take it for granted, that he was conſcious of the Weakneſs of his Client's Cauſe, and that it could no otherwiſe be defended, than by being not underſtood. This is, in Point, the Caſe of thoſe, who demand of all Mankind to be heard by the Clock, and will yet hear no Body; who talk and rail by Wholeſale, whilſt they cannot bear a ſingle Jeſt, or ludicrous Expreſſion; and who write Volumes by the Yard themſelves, and are in an Uproar, and Outrageous, at a ſingle Half-Sheet of other Peoples.

How abſurd would it appear for an Army of an Hundred Thouſand Men entrench'd up to the Ears, to call aloud for the Aſſiſtance of the Conſtable and Watch, to defend their Camp againſt the Aſſaults and Storms of Highwaymen and Houſe-breakers! Juſt ſuch a Requeſt do the Popiſh Clergy Abroad make, when they cry out, Fire, Fire! Help, Help! and demand the Aſſiſtance of the Secular Power; and inſiſt, that no Sermons be preached, Books printed, or Harangues made, but their own. They have already more Advantages than Truth can deſire, and indeed enough to offend her Modeſty, and to make her aſhamed and bluſh; they are too well armed for a fair Adverſary, and yet are always complaining of the Shortneſs of their Weapons; and declaring themſelves overcome, by calling out for more Help.

Beſides

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Beſides

Beſides the Piety and Example of their Lives, they are vaſtly numerous, and in Poſſeſſion of great and various Dignities, and immenſe Revenues and Dependencies; are all bred up to Letters; have the Prejudices of the People, the ſole Education of Youth, the Fears as well as the Favours of the fair Sex on their Side; and have the Weekly Opportunity of haranguing to the People upon their own Uſefulneſs and Importance; and they tell us too, they have a ſole Right to the Scripture-Prophecy, *That the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt them.*

Crown'd Heads always have thought it their Intereſt to keep Meaſures with them; Miniſters of State are not able to trick ſucceſsfully, and play the Knave, without their Leave and Aſſiſtance: They take Advantage, and make their Market of all Factions and Diſturbances in States, and apply them to their own Benefit: Knaves ſhelter themſelves under their Protection; Hypocrites court and ſeem to admire them, and Bigots and Enthuſiaſts adore them. Every Event of Life contributes to their Intereſts: They Chriſten; they Educate; they Marry; they Church; they Bury; they Perſwade; they Frighten; they Govern; and ſcarce any Thing is done without them. Notwithſtanding all this, they roar aloud, that they cannot keep their Ground, but that Contempt and Infidelity pour in upon them like an Inundation.

And

And yet it is very remarkable, that the first Christians were not only destitute of all the before-mentioned Advantages, but their Enemies enjoyed them; and they themselves were persecuted and contemned, buffeted, ridiculed and calumniated, in constant Books and Libels, published by the greatest Philosophers and Wits of the Heathen World; and yet Christianity every Day spread far and wide, and made a wonderful Progress; insomuch, that in an Age or Two, Superstition and Idolatry were driven from a great Part of the Earth.

A Speculation upon this Head, and an Enquiry into the Causes of so prodigious a Change, would be worthy the Endeavours of the brightest Wits and Genius's of our Age and Country, who undoubtedly must be found amongst our own genuine Clergy. I have long wished to see a Dissertation upon this great and useful Subject; and with the greatest Humility propose to the Consideration of the Lower House of Convocation at their next (so much desired) Meeting, to give the World their Thoughts upon it, in a Second Representation of the Causes of Vice and Infidelity: And in Hopes to encourage them in so publick an Undertaking, I intend before that Happy Day, to give them my poor Assistance, and in some Measure to alleviate their Labours, by endeavouring to prove that no Part of this Misfortune ought to be laid at the Door of the Laity.

In-

Indeed, it would be unbecoming the Reſpect and Reverence, which I have always profeſſed, and hope ſhall always pay to theſe Reverend Gentlemen, to but hint at any Thing ſo improbable as the contrary Conjecture: For ſince Human Nature is always the ſame, who can entertain ſo undecent a Thought of their Deſigns, or have ſuch a Contempt of their Performances, as to imagine that Mankind can grow worſe under the Light of the Goſpel, and in Defiance of their pious Lives and Examples; and of the numerous Forms of publick and private Prayer; their conſtant Sermons, and godly Exhortations; and of ſo many Creeds, Catechiſms, Syſtems, Commentaries, and whole Cart-Loads of other ghoſtly Geer, which the World is every Day bleſs'd with from the laborious Endeavours of above a Million of Eccleſiaſticks, who have always, and do ſtill coſt the People more than their whole Civil and Military Expence put together? Therefore ſince we may be ſure that this great Change and Degeneracy cannot be owing to any remaining Defect amongſt the Laity, it may well be expected from Perſons of *their* Penetration and Perſpicuity, to let us into the true Cauſes of ſo ſurprizing a Phænomenon.

In the mean Time, (tho' with all the due Submiſſion of an humble Votary) I ſhall for once preſume to adviſe them, not to level ſo many Batteries againſt good Senſe and human

man Reaſon, which are impregnably fortified and ſecure againſt the fierceſt Aſſaults. A great Philoſopher tells us, *when Reaſon is againſt a Man, a Man will be againſt Reaſon*; and therefore I much fear if theſe my Friends, and Patrons, ſhould continue to hold forth and exert their Eloquence againſt Private Judgment, Freedom of Enquiry, and a daily and diligent Search after a religious Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, that the World may miſtake their Endeavours, and imagine all theſe good Things make againſt them; and yet unfortunately they are in ſuch Repute, that there are little Hopes of depreciating or putting them out of Countenance.

Beſides, I humbly conceive it to be impolitick upon other Accounts too. It appears to me to be very indiſcreet in Perſons *Militant*, to endeavour to put an End to a War, which for the moſt part puts an End to themſelves and their own Pay. A jovial Country Parſon once in a merry Mood, paſſing by a Waggon which was overturn'd, told the Carter that he had kill'd the Devil; to which the profane Wretch reply'd, that he was glad of it with all his Heart, *becauſe then*, quoth Ralph, *I have ſpoiled your Trade.* A Word to the Wiſe is ſufficient.

Methinks alſo, it ſhould be doing too much Credit to his *Satanick Majeſty*, to ſuppoſe him more than a Match for a Million of conſecrated Perſons; with all their Hierarchial Powers, and as they ſay, Divine Aſſiſtances about them.

NUMBER XII.

Wednesday, April 6. 1720.

The Enmity *of the* High Clergy *to the* Reformation, *and their* Arts *to* Defeat *the* End *of it.*

Machiavel adviſes any One, who would change the Conſtitution of a State, to keep as much as poſſible to the old Forms; for then the People ſeeing the ſame Officers, the ſame Formalities, Courts of Juſtice, and other outward Appearances, are inſenſible of the Alteration, and believe themſelves in Poſſeſſion of their old Government.

Thus, *Cæſar*, when he ſeized the *Roman* Liberties, cauſed himſelf to be choſen *Dictator*, (which was an Ancient Office) continued the Senate, the Conſuls, the Tribunes, the Cenſors, and all other Powers of the Common-Wealth; and yet changed *Rome* from the moſt Free, to the moſt Tyrannical Government in the World. This

This Policy is yet more neceſſary to be obſerved in altering the Religion of a Country; for very few Perſons, of any Sect or Party in Faith, are converſant with the Speculations or diſtinguiſhing Tenets of their own Church, or ſo much as know what they are.

Whilſt they ſee the ſame broad-brim'd Hats, Bands, Caſſocks, and Long Gowns; and hear the ſame Pſalms ſung in the ſame Tone, and in the ſame faſhioned Buildings; they think they have the ſame Religion, and will be angry with any one who ſhall tell them the contrary.

But if the Ceremonies or other Forms of Religious Worſhip are to be altered too, the Change muſt be made inſenſibly, and by Degrees, that the Difference may be unobſerved, or thought of no Conſequence; and all Advantages muſt be taken of Revolutions in Government, of Publick Calamities, and of Factions, when they beat high, and are ready to fall into any Meaſures to oppoſe and mortify each other.

The Prieſthood in all Ages have made theſe Arts, and a Thouſand others, contribute to their Greatneſs; and the High-Church Jacobite Clergy of *England* have put them all in Practice to regain every Thing they loſt at the *Reformation*; and if they could but have prevailed upon their Flocks to have followed them, they had long ago ſold them again in the *Roman* Market: But ſince we of the Lai-

ty are ſo refractory, and hang backward, they now ſeem reſolved to gallop away by themſelves, and leave us to come our own Pace after; inſomuch that a Clergyman of the Church of *England*, as by Law Eſtabliſhed, is, at preſent, become a moſt agreeable Sight, and many of his Brethren treat him as a Monſter.

It muſt be evident to any one, who has read our Eccleſiaſtical Story, that the Reformation in *England* was carry'd on, not only without, but againſt the Conſent of the whole Body of the Clergy, (very few excepted) who always oppoſed every Step towards their own Amendment: It was, indeed, every where, properly ſpeaking, an Effort, or Inſurrection of the Laity, againſt the Pride and Oppreſſion of the Prieſts, who had cheated them of their Eſtates, impoſed upon their Conſciences, debauched their Wives, and were ever inſulting their Perſons

The poor Injured People had long felt the Malady, but were ſo intimidated by their own Superſtition, and the over-grown Power of their haughty Maſters, that they durſt not think of a Remedy, till a bold and diſobliged Friar or Two diſſolved the Enchantment; and then the whole Chriſtian World ſeemed to riſe at once againſt this Fairy and Fantaſtical Empire.

But People long uſed to Servitude, knowing not what Freedom is, or how to preſerve it when thrown into their Laps, have always

Recourſe

Recourſe to ſome Leaders, of whoſe Honeſty and greater Wiſdom they have conceived an Opinion; and theſe for the moſt Part abuſe ſuch Confidence, to advance their own Views of Wealth and Power.

So it happened in this Caſe; and conſequently the Reformation went partially on, according to the Direction under which it fell. Where Prieſts were at the Head of it, they attempted only to make it a Reformation of Sounds and Diſtinctions: They took no Offence at the Riches and Grandeur of the Clergy, (which was the Source of all other Evils) but were angry that they had not their Share of them; and ſo look'd upon the Revolt only as a Means to aggrandize themſelves: They condemned not the Tyranny, but the Tyrants; and attempted to uſurp that Power in their own Perſons, which they loudly exclaimed againſt in the *Romiſh* Prieſthood: Moſt Sets of them wonderfully well agreed, that there was a Divine Right in the Clergy to dictate to the Laity in Religious Matters; but every Sect claimed that Power to themſelves, independent of all others.

They could not agree about ſharing the Prey, but each would have had the Whole; which had this good Effect however, that they were all obliged to abate much of their Pretenſions, in order to engage Cuſtomers; and, I thank God, they have not yet been able to raiſe the Price again to the old Market; tho', to do them Juſtice, they are no Ways anſwer-

able to their Succeſſors, for having let ſlip any Opportunity to that Purpoſe.

But whilſt they were thus carrying on their Project for Dominion, they found it neceſſary to throw out a Barrel to the Whale, and keep the Peoples Minds buſied, and their Paſſions afloat, with Metaphyſical Subtilties and Diſtinctions, of no Uſe to true Religion and Morality, tho' very conducive to their own ambitious and tyrannical Deſigns.

I would gladly know from theſe Reverend Venders of Trifles, whether it would have been worth the Thouſandth part of the Combuſtion which has been made, or the Blood which has been ſpilt, only to ſettle a few Speculations, if they could have been ſettled? Pray where is the eſſential Difference between *Tranſubſtantiation*, *Conſubſtantiation*, and the *Real Preſence*? What the Conſequence, whether a Child be baptized by one ſort of Prieſts, or by another? Or of what Uſe to Mankied are the abſtruſe Queſtions about *Predeſtination*, *Free-Will*, or *Free Grace*? What is the Difference, as to the Duties or Ordinances of Chriſtianity, if they are adminiſtred under the Direction of a ſingle Perſon, a Bench of Biſhops, or a Lower Houſe of Convocation, or none of them all, ſo they be piouſly adminiſtred? Or whether the chimerical Line of Succeſſion is broken, or ever had a Being?

Since 'tis agreed amongſt all our preſent Sects of Chriſtians, that the Saviour of the

World

World is the Son of God, deſcended from Heaven to teach Virtue and Goodneſs to Men, and to die for our Redemption; how are we concerned in the Scholaſtick Notions of the *Trinity?* Will the Scripture be more regarded, or the Precepts of it be better obſerved, if the Three Perſons are believed to be Three Divine diſtinct Spirits and Minds, who are ſo many real ſubſiſting Perſons? Whether the Son and Holy Ghoſt are Omnipotent of themſelves, or are ſubordinate and dependent on the Father? Or if they are independent, whether their Union conſiſts in a mutual Conſciouſneſs of one another's Thoughts and Deſigns, or in any Thing elſe? Whether they are Three Attributes of God, *viz.* Goodneſs, Wiſdom and Power? Or Three internal Acts, *viz.* Creation, Redemption and Sanctification? Or Two internal Acts of the One ſubſiſting Perſon of the Father; that is to ſay, the Father underſtanding and willing himſelf and his own Perfections? Or Three internal Relations, namely, the Divine Subſtance and Godhead conſider'd as Unbegotten, Begotten and Proceeding? Or Three Names of God aſcribed to him in Holy Scripture, as he is Father of all Things, as he did inhabit in an extraordinary Manner in the Man Jeſus Chriſt, and as he effected every Thing by his Spirit, or his Energy and Power? Or laſtly, whether the Three Perſons are only Three Beings, but what ſort of Beings we neither

know, nor ought to pretend to know; which I take to be the Trinity of the Mob, as well as of ſome other wiſer Heads.

As far as I can remember, theſe are the important Queſtions which have ſet Mankind together by the Ears, for ſo many Ages; and it ſeems are yet thought of Conſequence enough to create new Feuds, and mortal Dudgeon amongſt all our Sets of Eccleſiaſticks. But why muſt we of the Laity quarrel about them too? What have Beaus and Belles, old Women, Coblers and Milk-Maids to do with *Homoouſios*, *Conſubſtantiality*, *Perſonality*, *Hypoſtatical Union*, *Infinite Satisfaction*, &c. none of which hard Words, or any like them, are to be found in Scripture; and therefore, I think, we may even return them to *Rome*, that being the Place from whence they came, and be contented to be good Chriſtians without them.

We ought to ſhew our Faith and Obedience to God, by a chearful Submiſſion to his Commands, and not affect a vain Curioſity of prying into his Secrets; pretend to Philoſophize upon his abſtracted Nature and Eſſence; and with our limited and corrupt Underſtandings, aſſume to comprehend infinite Wiſdom and Power, and define the Modus of its Exiſtence and Operations. Almighty God would not make himſelf farther known even to *Moſes*, nor ſuffer himſelf to be otherwiſe deſcribed to the Children of *Iſrael*, (tho' to get them out of the Land of

Bon-

Bondage) than by the comprehenſive Words, *I am that I am*; which methinks might baffle our officious Impertinence, and put us in Mind of the Danger of peeping into the Ark.

The above Diſputes make us neither wiſer nor better; Men are not intended for Speculation; exceeding few are capable of it: The Faculties of our Minds, as well as the Frame of our Bodies, are adapted to Labour, and to ſupply the Exigencies of our Nature: We are formed for Society and mutual Help, and the Goodneſs of God has implanted in us Qualities ſuited to theſe Ends; and, beſides, has given us Precepts for our Aſſiſtance, and annexed infinite Rewards to the Obſervance of them. We know how to be good Parents, good Children, good Neighbours, and good Subjects; but how ſmall a part of Mankind underſtand, or are capable of underſtanding Metaphyſical Queſtions! When they uſe the Terms, it is plain they have no Ideas annexed to them, but fight at Blind-Man's Buff, and quarrel about what none of them underſtand: It is evident therefore, that the All-wiſe Providence could not intend to perplex and confound weak Minds with ſuch Subtilties, for the Knowledge of which he has not given them ſuitable Qualifications.

NUMBER XIII.

Wedneſday, April 13. 1720.

The Church *proved a Creature of the* Civil Power, *by Acts of Parliament, and the Oaths of the Clergy.*

I Have obſerved, in my laſt Paper, that many of the Proteſtant Prieſts endeavoured to divert the growing Spirit in the Chriſtian World for Reformation, to Metaphyſical and uſeleſs Speculations, of no Benefit to the preſent or eternal Happineſs of Mankind, whilſt they were ſeating themſelves at leiſure in their Predeceſſors Chairs.

But far otherwiſe was it where it fell under the Direction of Laymen, who conſider'd it as an Opportunity put by Heaven into their Hands, to free themſelves from the Uſurpations, and unjuſt Domination of the Prieſthood: They made no Scruple (notwithſtanding the loud Cry of Sacrilege) to ſeize and

and apply to publick Uſes, a great Part of thoſe Riches, which the Clergy had extorted from old Women, and ſuperſtitious and enchanted Bigots; the Compoſitions for Murthers, for publick and private Robberies; the Plunder of dying and deſpairing Sinners, and the Supports of their own Idleneſs, Pride, Ignorance and Debauchery.

A bold and honeſt Phyſician (whoſe Name was *Eraſtus*) at this time ſtarted up, and told the World, that all theſe Squabbles of the Clergy about their own Power, were Diſputes *de lana caprina*, and that none of them had any Right to what they almoſt all claimed: That the Quarrel amongſt them was only which of them ſhould oppreſs the Laity, who were independent of them all; for that their Miniſters were their Servants; Creatures of their own making, and not of God Almighty's: He ſhewed them from Reaſon and Scripture, that every State had the ſame Authority of modelling their Eccleſiaſtical as Civil Government; that the Goſpel gave no Preeminence, or Authority to Chriſtians over one another, but every Man alike (who had ſuitable Abilities) was qualified to execute all the Duties and Offices of their moſt holy Religion; and that it was only a Matter of Prudence and Convenience to appoint particular Perſons to officiate for the reſt; with proper Rewards and Encouragements; which Perſons would be intitled to no more Power than they themſelves gave them.

This

This Doctrine, as little as it pleaſed the Clergy, yet prevailed ſo far with the Laity, that moſt Proteſtant States modelled their Eccleſiaſtical Polity according to their own Inclinations or Intereſts; and particularly, in *England*, the whole Reformation was built upon this Principle, which ever till lately was eſteemed the great Characteriſtick of the Church of *England*; and therefore 'tis the laſt Degree of Prieſtly Inſolence for a Body of Men to call themſelves the only true Churchmen at the ſame time that they deny, and every where exclaim againſt, the fundamental and eſſential Article which diſtinguiſhes it from moſt other Churches, and particularly from Presbytery; for as to the reſt of the Articles, the *Calviniſts* are more Orthodox than the Churchmen themſelves.

At the very Beginning of the Reformation, the Clergy here in *England*, conſcious of their own Enormities, and the juſt Vegeance which hung over their Heads, were contented to diſgorge their ill-gotten, and as ill uſed Power; and, in full Convocation, threw themſelves upon the King's Mercy, acknowledging his Supremacy in the fulleſt and moſt ſignificant Words; and promiſed in *verbo ſacerdotii*, that for the future they would never preſume to attempt, alledge, claim, or put in uſe, enact, or promulgate any Canons, Conſtitutions, or Ordinances, without the King's moſt Royal Licence and Aſſent had thereunto; and humbly beſought his Majeſty to appoint Thirty

Two

Two Perſons, half Clergy and half Laity, to examine the Canons and Conſtitutions in being, and to abrogate and confirm them, as they ſhould think good.

This Petition was changed into an Act of Parliament by the 25th of *Hen.* the VIIIth, *Cap.* 19. But it is there declared, That the Crown and Convocation together, ſhall not put in Execution any Canons, Conſtitution, or Ordinances, which ſhall be contrariant or repugnant to the King's Prerogative, or the Laws of the Kingdom: The ſame Statute alſo gives an Appeal from the ſupreme Eccleſiaſtical Court, to the King's Commiſſion.

In the ſame Seſſion of Parliament, the Manner of Proceeding upon the *Conge d' Elire* is directed, *viz.* * A Licence from the Crown is to be ſent to the Chapter to chooſe or elect an Archbiſhop or Biſhop, and a Letter miſſive with it, to nominate the Perſon they are to chooſe; which if they do not obey, nor ſignify the ſame, according to the Tenor of the Act, within Twenty Days, they are ſubjected to a Præmunire; and if the Election is not made within Twelve Days, the King may nominate a Biſhop by Letters Patents without any Election at all, as is now done in *Ireland*, and formerly was ſo in *Scotland*, where their Biſhops were *durante bene placito*.

* 25 *Hen.* VIII. *Cap.* 20.

The

The next Year the Parliament * reciting that the King juſtly and rightly is, and ought to be ſupreme Head of the Church of *England*, enact the ſame, and that he ſhall have full Power to viſit, redreſs, reform, correct, and reſtrain all Errors, Hereſies, Abuſes, Offences, Contempts, and Enormities, whatſoever they be, which by any manner of ſpiritual Authority or Juriſdiction, ought or may be reformed, redreſſed, *&c.*

Afterwards, in the 37th Year of the ſame Reign, the Parliament, reciting that the Biſhop of *Rome* and his Adherents, minding utterly to aboliſh, obſcure, and delete the Power given by God to the Princes of the Earth, whereby they might get and gather to themſelves the Rule and Government of the World, had decreed, that no Layman might exerciſe Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction, leſt their falſe and uſurp'd Power which they pretended to have in Chriſt's Church might decay, wax vile, and be of no Reputation, (which Power they affirm to be contrary to the Word of God, and to his Majeſty's moſt high Prerogative) and reciting alſo, That Archbiſhops, Biſhops, Archdeacons, and other Eccleſiaſtical Perſons, have no manner of Juriſdiction Eccleſiaſtical, but by, from, and under the King's Majeſty; enacts, That Laymen, qualified as the Law appoints, may exerciſe all Parts of Eccleſia-

* 26 *H.* 8. *Cap.* 1.

ſtical

ſtical Juriſdiction, and all Cenſures and Coercions appertaining, or in any wiſe belonging thereunto.

The 2*d* and 3*d* of *Edward* the Sixth, *Cap.* 1. enacts the Common-Prayer Book, (which was before compiled and drawn up by the King's Authority) and makes it a Law.

The 3*d* and 4*th* of *Edward* the Sixth, *Cap.* 12. appoints ſuch Form and Manner of making and conſecrating Archbiſhops, Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons, and other Miniſters of the Church, as by Six Prelates, and Six other Men of this Realm, by the King to be appointed and aſſigned, or by the greater Number of them, ſhall be deviſed, *&c.* and *none other.* Theſe two Acts were confirmed with ſome Alterations, in the 5*th* and 6*th* Year of this Reign.

The 1*ſt* of Queen *Elizabeth*, *Cap.* 1. eſtabliſhes and enacts, That all Juriſdictions, Privileges, Superiorities, and Pre-eminences, Spiritual and Eccleſiaſtical, at any Time lawfully uſed, or exerciſed, for the Viſitation of the Eccleſiaſtical State or Perſons, and for the Reformation, Order, and Correction of the ſame; and of all manner of Errors, Hereſies, Schiſms, Abuſes, Contempts, Offences, and Enormities, ſhall be annexed to the Imperial Crown of this Realm; and gives Power and Authority to it to appoint any Perſons, being natural born Subjects, to exerciſe all ſorts of Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction; and declares at the ſame Time *what*, and *what only*, ſhall be deemed *Hereſy*.

The

The Oath of Supremacy (which is an Aſſent to theſe Laws, and obliges thoſe who take it, to aſſiſt and defend them) is appointed in this Act; which Oath all Eccleſiaſtical Perſons, as well as any others, who ſhall be promoted and preferred to any Degree or Order in the Univerſity, are to take under ſevere Penalties.

The 8*th* of Queen *Elizabeth*, reciting that the Queen had in her Order and Diſpoſition, all Juriſdiction, Power, and Authority, Eccleſiaſtical as well as Civil; and had cauſed divers Archbiſhops and Biſhops to be *duly* elected, and conſecrated; does confirm all the ſaid Elections and Conſecrations; as alſo the Common Prayer Book, and the Orders and Forms for the making of Prieſts, Deacons, and Miniſters, which were added to it in the Fifth and Sixth Years of *Edward* the Sixth.

All which before-mentioned Acts are now in being, in full Force, and ſworn to by all the Clergy, who are ſubjected to a Præmunire if they contradict them.

Thus our Parliaments, at or juſt after the Reformation, whilſt the Memory of Sacerdotal Oppreſſions continued in their Minds, were reſolved to pare their Claws, curb their Inſolence, and not leave it in their Power to corrupt Religion any more; and therefore put it under the Care of the Civil Magiſtrate, who could ſeldom have any Intereſt in perverting it: Whereas there is not any Inſtance

when

when it has been left to the Conduct of any Set of Eccleſiaſticks whatſoever, but they have abuſed and ſacrificed it to the Advancement of their own Wealth and Power.

Even *Aaron* himſelf (though a High Prieſt of God's own Appointment) when *Moſes*, the *Civil Magiſtrate*, was but a little while abſent to receive the Almighty's Commands, cheated the *Iſraelites* of their Earings, melted them into a Golden Calf, and encouraged the Boobies to ſay, *Theſe were the Gods which brought them out of the Land of* Egypt. He built an Altar before his Idol, proclaimed a Faſt, and then made uſe of all this Deceit to extort from that ſtupid and ſuperſtitious People, Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings; which provoked Almighty God to that degree, *that his Wrath was kindled againſt the whole Nation, and he was inclined to conſume them all, till* Moſes *the Lay Soveraign, turned his fierce Wrath by his Prayers, and by remembring him of the Oath he ſware to* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *viz. that he would multiply their Seed like the Stars in Heaven*, &c. And then it is true, that *the Lord repented of the Evil which he thought to do unto them:* But no Thanks to the Prieſt, who had drawn them into this Scrape, *Exod.* Chap. 32.

NUMBER XIV.

Wedneſday, April 20. 1720.

The Clergy *prov'd to be Creatures of the* Civil Power, *by the* Canons, *and their own publick Acts.*

IN my laſt Diſcourſe, I have ſhewn what is meant by the Supremacy of the Crown of *England*; by virtue of which, our Kings ſometimes with, and ſometimes without their Parliaments, have govern'd and modelled the Eccleſiaſtical State, ever ſince the Reformation. Biſhops, as well as inferior Clergymen, have been often ſuſpended and deprived by the King's Authority; and, in the Inſtance of Archbiſhop *Abbot*, for his Pleaſure. The *Popiſh* Biſhops were all deprived by Queen *Elizabeth*, and ſome Thouſands of the Parochial Clergy were ejected by the Act of Uniformity;

ty; and many alſo of all Orders were deprived at the Revolution.

I ſhall now proceed to ſhew what have been the Opinions and Practice of the whole Body of the Eccleſiaſticks, ſince the making of theſe Laws; in doing which I ſhall take Notice only of their publick and authentick Acts; for as to the Whimſeys of private Doctors, I think them of ſo little Weight, that I ſhall be aſhamed to quote them on either ſide of the Queſtion.

Upon the Clergy's owning the King Head of the Church at the Reformation, all the Biſhops took out Commiſſions for the exerciſing their Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction; which were renewed again upon his Son's coming to the Throne. In theſe Commiſſions, all Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction is owned to proceed from the Crown, as from a ſupreme Head and Fountain and Spring of all Magiſtracy, in the Kingdom; and they acknowledge, that they executed it formerly only *ex precario*, and that now with grateful Minds they accepted the Favour from the King's Liberality and Indulgence, and would be always ready to yield it up again, when his Majeſty pleaſed to require it.

Theſe Commiſſions recited, amongſt other Particulars of Spiritual Power, that of Ordaining Presbyters, and of Eccleſiaſtical Correction.

The 2*d* Canon excommunicates every one who ſhall endeavour to hurt or extenuate the King's Authority in Eccleſiaſtical Caſes, as it

is ſettled by the Laws of the Kingdom, and declares he ſhall not be reſtored till he has publickly recanted ſuch *impious Errors.*

The 37*th* Canon obliges all Perſons, to their utmoſt, to keep and obſerve all and every one of the Statutes and Laws, made for reſtoring to the Crown the antient Juriſdiction it had over the Eccleſiaſtical State.

The 12th of King *James*'s Canons declares, that whoever ſhall affirm that it is lawful for the Order either of Miniſters or Laicks, to make Canons, Decrees, or Conſtitutions in Eccleſiaſtical Matters, without the King's Authority, and ſubmits himſelf to be governed by them, is *ipſo facto* excommunicated, and is not to be abſolved before he has publickly repented and renounced theſe *Anabaptiſtical Errors.*

Archbiſhop *Bancroft*, when at the Head of all the Biſhops in *England*, he delivered Articles to King *James* againſt the Secular Courts, for encroaching upon the Eccleſiaſtical, owns, that all Juriſdictions, Eccleſiaſtical as well as Civil, are annex'd to the Imperial Crown of this Realm, as may be read more at large in the Lord *Coke*'s *Third Inſtitute*; which I would recommend to the peruſal of every one, as a Specimen of the Difference between Eccleſiaſticks and Laymen.

I ſhall think it neceſſary only here to add, that the Clergy have never preſumed, by any publick Act, directly to contravert this Prerogative, or indeed but to nibble at it, unleſs in one

one Inſtance during the laſt Reign, which the Queen reſented highly; and ſhe let the Convocation know, by a Letter to the Archbiſhop, that *ſhe was reſolved to maintain her Supremacy, as a Fundamental Part of the Conſtitution of the Church of* England.

This is the Supremacy of the Crown; theſe are the genuine Principles of the Church of *England*; which whoever denies, may be a *Papiſt*, a *Presbyterian*, a *Muggletonian*, a *Fifth Monarchy Man*, or any Thing elſe, beſides a Member of our Communion. This Doctrine, and theſe Opinions have been acknowledg'd and ſworn to by every Eccleſiaſtick ſince the Reformation; and we daily ſee they are All ready to ſwear them over again upon any freſh Motives and Advantage; and ſure no One will ſuggeſt, that the Whole Clergy of *England* have lived in the State of Perjury for near Two Hundred Years: I am ſure, if this be the Caſe, it is not their Intereſt to let us know it, ſince their Authority muſt be of very little Weight in any Thing elſe.

We have it here upon Oath, that all Juriſdiction, Power and Authority, Spiritual or Eccleſiaſtical, of what Kind or Sort ſoever it be, does flow from, and is derived from the King's Majeſty; and I readily allow them to have all the reſt by Divine Right. They have been always very happy at Diſtinctions and Diſcoveries, and therefore if they can find out any Power or Authority, which is of *no Kind or Sort whatſoever*, I think they ought to

have it for their Pains: I wiſh them much Joy with it; and ſhall own it always to be Sacrilege in any One who ſhall attempt to take it from them; but, if there is any ſuch Thing, it is plain it belongs to them as Governours of the Inviſible Church, and is of a Nature we know nothing of.

For it is certain, that Archbiſhops and Biſhops are Creatures of the Civil Power, and derive their Being and Exiſtence from it: They are choſen by the Direction of One Act of Parliament, and ordained and conſecrated according to a Model preſcribed by another, in which Thoſe who officiate, act only Miniſterially; and all other Methods of chooſing them which the Clergy can deviſe, are declared void and ineffectual, and will not convey any Spiritual Power at all; nor, I dare ſay, will any Clergyman in *England* pay Submiſſion to ſuch a Choice, if he does not like the Man; nor if he does, provided he thinks that he ſhall loſe any Thing by it. If the Biſhops have no Power but what they derive from the Crown, they can convey None but of the ſame Sort to the Inferior Clergy.

I durſt not have ſtood the Imputation of Calumny, in charging any of the preſent Clergy with Principles or Practices ſo directly in Defiance of theſe glaring and notorious Declarations of the whole Body, as well as their own repeated Oaths and Subſcriptions, if I had not the Authority of the brighteſt Luminary of the preſent Church and Age (our

Great

Great Metropolitan) to bear me out, who aſſures us in his *Appeal*, "That a new Sort "of Diſciplinarians are ariſen up from a- "mongſt our ſelves, who ſeem to comply "with the Government of the Church, much "upon the ſame Account as Others do with "That of the State; not out of Conſcience "to their Duty, or any Love they have for "it; but becauſe it is the Eſtabliſh'd Church, "and they cannot keep their Preferments "without it: They hate our Conſtitution, "and All who ſtand up in good Earneſt for "it; but for all that, they hold faſt to it; "and ſo go on to ſubſcribe and rail."

To theſe wild and Enthuſiaſtick Notions we owe the preſent Diſaffection; and moſt, if not all the Calamities and Publick Diſturbances that have happen'd ſince the *Revolution*; and yet (which is amazing to think of) they have prevailed ſo far amongſt the corrupt Part of the Eccleſiaſticks, that I wiſh we could find more even of the Low Church Clergymen, who dare thoroughly to renounce theſe *Impious and Anabaptiſtical Errors*, as their own Canons call them.

Dominion! Dominion is the loud Cry; which, as it has already produced all the Cruelties and Abſurdities of Popery, ſo it is ſtill teeming with, or bringing forth new Monſters; and what other Iſſue can be expected from ſo unnatural a Copulation, as that of the Chriſtian Prieſthood with worldly Power?

To this we are beholden for all the Corruptions and Fopperies brought into Religious Worſhip, as well as the ill-ſhapen and ungainly Brats of Paſſive Obedience; the Divine Right of Kings and Biſhops; the Uninterrupted Succeſſion; the Prieſts Power of the Keys; of Binding and Looſing; remitting and retaining Sins; the Real Preſence in the Sacrament; the Altar, and Unbloody Sacrifice upon it; the giving the Holy Ghoſt; of Excommunication, as laid Claim to; and Conſecration of Churches and Church-Yards; the Reconciliation of God's knowing what we ſhall do with a Power in us not to do it; of Perſecution for Opinions, and the Tritheiſtical Charity; with a long Train of Monkiſh Fooleries beſides: All, or any Part of which, could never have entered into the Heart of One Layman, or Clergyman either, if Nothing had been to be got by them.

NUMBER XV.

Wedneſday, April 27. 1720.

The Abſurdity *and* Impoſſibility *of* Church-Power, *as independent on the* State.

I Have ſhewn, in my laſt two Diſcourſes, that the Clergy of *England* have no Juriſdiction, Power or Authority whatſoever, which is not derived mediately or immediately from the Legiſlature; and that they have all ſworn to this Principle: I now own my ſelf ſo much concern'd for their Reputation, that I will even run the Hazard of incurring the Diſpleaſure of ſome of them, by proving, that they have taken true Oaths, and that it is impoſſible to conſtitute a Proteſtant National Church upon any other Foundation.

I intend to ſhew, in the Courſe of theſe Papers, that there is not the leaſt Colour or Pretence for the chimerical Diſtinction of Eccleſiaſtical and Civil, in any other Senſe than

as

as the Words *Maritime* and *Military* are uſed to denote different Branches of the Executive Power; for take away the legal Eſtabliſhment, and the Clergy can have no Power at all, but what flows from the Conſent of voluntary Societies; which I undertake hereafter demonſtratively to make out; and I defy all the Eccleſiaſticks in the World, united together, to take one Step towards proving the contrary, without plunging themſelves in everlaſting Nonſenſe and Abſurdity.

But to keep them a little in good Humour, I will ſuppoſe, for the preſent, that their wild Hypotheſis is true; and that our Saviour, whilſt upon Earth, (even againſt his own Declarations) had Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction over the whole Earth; that he gave it to the Apoſtles; that they convey'd it on to their Succeſſors; and that the Church of *Rome*, and the preſent Clergy of the Church of *England*, *as by Law eſtabliſhed*, are their undoubted Succeſſors: Nay, I will be ſo civil as not to ask one Queſtion, what ſort of Power that was? but take it for granted it was worldly Authority, and ought to be rewarded and ſupported by worldly Equipage, Wealth and Titles; and if they have any Thing more to ask of me, I will grant that too, and then examine what Uſe can be made of theſe Conceſſions to the preſent Purpoſe.

I deſire firſt to be informed, from whence they will fetch their Eccleſiaſtical Heraldry of Archbiſhops, Dioceſan Biſhops, Deans, Chapters,

Chapters, Archdeacons, the new Office of Deacons, Officials, Commiſſaries, the Two Houſes of Convocation with co-ordinate Powers, Eccleſiaſtical Courts, Pariſh Prieſts, and Curates, with the whole Train of inferior Machines, and ſpiritual Under-ſtrappers. Here I doubt all their Texts, all their Schemes will fail them; for very few of theſe hard Names will be found even in their own Tranſlations of the Bible, and they muſt have Recourſe to Human Authority at laſt.

If they ſay, (as I ſuſpect they will) that the Government of the Church being conveyed down to the Biſhops from the Apoſtles, they muſt have all Power which is neceſſary to it; and conſequently have a Right to appoint Courts of Judicature, and Eccleſiaſtical Officers, as alſo to give them proper Powers to anſwer the Ends of their Truſt.

I would then ask them, whether this great Epiſcopal Authority is given to every Biſhop, independent of all the reſt; to all the Biſhops of the whole Church every where diſperſed, agreeing together; to the Majority of this Whole; or to the Majority of any Number of them meeting in one Place, either by Conſent, Accident, or the Appointment of Princes or States? For, I think, it muſt be agreed by all the World, that if the Biſhops had any Power from God, which is Independent of the Civil Sovereign, he cannot reſtrain, model or limit it; and that any accidental Alterations of the Bounds of Dominions, either

ther from Conqueſt, Chance or Conſent, can no Way affect this Divine Authority, or hinder its Operation.

If every Biſhop has this whole Power delegated to him from God; then by what Authority can the Exerciſe of it be afterwards reſtrained to a particular Diſtrict or Dioceſe, ſo as to make his Actions out of it, not only *invalid*, but *ſchiſmatical* and criminal? Who can limit a Power given by the Almighty? Not the Civil Sovereign, who has nothing to do in another Juriſdiction; nor the Biſhop himſelf, who muſt accept it upon the Terms God has given it.

It cannot be ſuppoſed that he receives it for his own Sake, but as a Truſt for the Benefit of Chriſtianity; and it muſt be the higheſt Breach of this great Truſt, not to diſcharge it perſonally, but to divide it with others, of whoſe Honeſty he can have no ſufficient Knowledge.

Beſides, when theſe Biſhops differ from one another, (which will happen as often as they have different Complexions, Intereſts, or Underſtandings) what muſt the Chriſtian World then do? Muſt they follow the Biſhop of *B—r*, or the Abbot of *W*——? Or ſuſpend their Chriſtianity till they are all agreed? A ſolid Rock truly to build God's Church upon.

So great a Body of Men as the whole Chriſtian Church, or the Majority of them, never did, or could meet together; and if

ſuch

ſuch a Thing was poſſible, they would only Scold or Fight; and therefore any one may with great Modeſty affirm, that no Eccleſiaſtical Eſtabliſhment now in the World did, or could, take its Riſe from ſuch an Aſſembly.

Nothing therefore remains, but that, once upon a Time, a certain Number of Biſhops met together, and ſettled ſuch Conſtitutions, from which the reſt are derived; otherwiſe we muſt fetch them from the Civil Magiſtrate, or confeſs them all to be Uſurpations.

Thoſe who ſuppoſe the firſt, are obliged to tell us what Numbers are neceſſary to this Purpoſe; and if another equal Number ſhould ſettle a different Eſtabliſhment in the ſame Diſtrict or Province, who will be the Schiſmaticks: I think it is agreed by all High-Churchmen, that every one of theſe can make as many other Biſhops, and Governours of the whole Church, as he pleaſes; and therefore if one of them in a frolickſome Humour ſhould create Two or Three Hundred of theſe *Eccleſiaſtical Princes*, are they all to have Votes in the *Epiſcopal College*? And I ask this Queſtion the rather, becauſe I my ſelf once knew a Drunken Popiſh Biſhop in *Ireland*, who would have made theſe Spiritual Sovereigns from Morning to Night for for a Pot of Ale a Piece.

If it ſhould be ſaid (as indeed what is not or may not be ſaid by Perſons of their Perſpicuity?)

ſpicuity?) that the Power it ſelf comes from God, but the Exerciſe of it is to be limited and directed by the Civil Sovereign; I anſwer, that, beſides the egregious Blunder of diſtinguiſhing between Power and the Exerciſe of Power, the firſt being only a Right to do certain Actions, in which the other conſiſts: this gives up the whole Queſtion; for there can be no greater Power neceſſary to give an Authority than to take it away; and every Reſtriction and Limitation is taking it away in Part: No one can have a Right to depoſe a Temporal Prince from any Part of his juſt Dominions, without having alſo the ſame Right to deprive him of the Whole; and in this Reſpect there can be no Difference between Temporal and Eccleſiaſtical Sovereignties.

If theſe Gentlemen were not in Poſſeſſion of ſanctifying Nonſenſe, they could not venture to tell us, that our Saviour has given Power to Biſhops to execute Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction thro' the whole Earth; and conſequently all Mankind muſt be their Spiritual Subjects: But that this great Power may here below be limited and reſtrained to Cities or Provinces, and parcelled out and divided in ſuch a Manner, that ſome may have large Diſtricts, others ſmall ones, in which no one elſe muſt officiate; nay, that many more may have none at all, and yet every one have univerſal Juriſdiction, and be a Biſhop of the whole Earth.

Theſe,

Theſe, with a huge Heap beſides of glaring Abſurdities and Contradictions, muſt be maintained by thoſe, who would reconcile the divine Right of Biſhops with any Proteſtant Eſtabliſhment now in the World. I have ſo amply ſhewn how inconſiſtent it is with our own, from the whole Tenor of our Laws and Canons, as well as the repeated Acknowledgments of the Clergy themſelves, that I ſhould think it not only needleſs but impertinent to ſay any thing further of it, did we not daily hear of ſuch Numbers of our Spiritual Guides, who rail againſt theſe Laws at the Time they ſwear and ſubſcribe to them, and complain aloud of them as Violations of their own divine Rights, and denounce Judgments upon the Nation for ſuch Uſurpations.

Therefore in my next Paper I ſhall deſcant a little upon the voluntary and moſt applauded Actions of the Higheſt, even of theſe High Gentlemen; and ſhew that they cannot help acknowledging the Principle I maintain, even in the Inſtances where they would oppoſe it, and amidſt their greateſt Demands for Power. This I intend to do, not with the leaſt Expectation or vain Hope to induce them to alter their Meaſures, (there being a Preſcription among the Eccleſiaſticks againſt ſuch Lay Follies,) but (if poſſible) to open the Eyes of their blind and ſtupid Adorers, and to let them ſee what wretched Idols they are worſhipping.

NUMBER XVI.

Wedneſday, May 4. 1720.

The Inconſiſtency of the Principles *and* Practices *of* High-Church; *with ſome Advice to the* Clergy.

IF the Eccleſiaſticks have any divine Right, which is neither derived from the Civil Magiſtrate, nor the Conſent of voluntary Societies, it muſt be veſted in a ſingle Perſon; in a certain Number of Perſons, which we all call Biſhops; or in common to them all: The Firſt is *Popery*, and the Laſt *Presbytery*. But I think there is no Eſtabliſhment which now ſubſiſts, or ever did ſubſiſt in the World, which does or did aſſert the divine Right of Biſhops, independent of the Pope; and conſequently it is the *Proprium* or peculiar Whimſy of our own perjured High-Churchmen, not only in Oppo-

Oppoſition to their Oaths and Subſcriptions (as I have ſhewed already) but to the moſt applauded Actions of their greateſt Champions; which 'tis the Buſineſs of this Paper to make out.

If there be a divine Right in the Biſhops to Govern the Church, it is ſpiritual Rebellion, and the higheſt Sacrilege, to uſurp upon this great Authority; but then, what will become of all the daily Daubing and fulſome Panegyrick upon the beſt eſtabliſhed Church in the World? Since I think it is agreed by all the Clergy, that the Power of Legiſlation, as far as they have any thing to do with it, is veſted in the Convocation, which conſiſts of two Houſes, one of Biſhops, the other of Presbyters; a Conſtitution utterly inconſiſtent with this divine Right; which the High-Clergy have been ſo far from regretting or complaining of, that it is one of their moſt eſſential Characteriſticks, to maintain the Power of the Lower Houſe againſt the Upper; that is, of Presbyters againſt their own Dioceſans.

They claim a co-ordinate Power with them in the ſupremeſt Acts of Church Government; an Authority of acting by themſelves, to chooſe their own time of meeting, to ſit as often and as long as they pleaſe, to adjourn by their own Authority, to begin what Buſineſs they think fit, to chooſe their own Committees, excuſe Abſence, receive Proxies, judge of Elections, cenſure their own Members, and do all other Acts, which ought to be done by the ſole Authority of a Houſe

which is it's own Maſter and Judge: All which though they are rank Presbytery, yet are alſo become the genuine Principles of modern High-Churchmen; at the ſame time that they aſſert a ſole, divine, Apoſtolick, and independent Power in the Biſhops to Govern the Church.

The aſſerting of theſe Rights of the Lower-Houſe, is the Merit of their preſent Champion, ſupplies the Wants of Charity in him, and covers a Thouſand Faults; and 'tis much to be feared and lamented, that all the late Zeal of a much greater Man, and the preſent Services he is doing, will ſcarcely atone for his having acted formerly upon Low-Church Principles, in defending the Prerogative of the Crown, and maintaining the Power of the Upper-Houſe over the Lower.

What Perſons or Party have ſupported the Biſhops and their Authority, ever ſince the Revolution, againſt their own Presbyters? All Low-Churchmen. Who were thoſe who have been always aſperſing, calumniating and libelling the two laſt Arch-Biſhops, our preſent Metropolitan, till very lately, the late Biſhop of *Salisbury*, and indeed every worthy Prelate; but the High-Church Prieſts and their Fellowers? And who have honoured and defended their Perſons and Characters, but Low-Churchmen?

Who exhibited Articles againſt a preſent Biſhop, for having impeached the King's Supremacy in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, (wholly inconſiſtent with the divine Right of Biſhops) but the

the High Church Clergy? Who ſupported the late Dean of *Carliſle* againſt his own Dioceſan? All High-Churchmen. And who defended both theſe Biſhops? All Low-Churchmen. Who burnt by the Hands of the common Hangman, a Book wrote by a Right Reverend Biſhop, which aſſerted King *William*'s Title upon the once genuine Principles of Conqueſt, and paſs'd a ſcandalous and groundleſs Vote upon the late learned Biſhop of *Worceſter*, but High-Churchmen? And who voted for theſe Biſhops? All Low-Churchmen.

Such open Blunders and glaring Inconſiſtencies muſt theſe Men be reduced to, who meaſure all Opinions by their preſent Intereſt and Paſſions; and who have no other Standard of Right and Wrong, but what moſt gratifies their Ambition, Pride, Covetouſneſs, or Revenge.

I can ſafely ſay, that, as I had no Intereſt in entring upon this Deſign, nor can have any in continuing it, but to promote the Cauſe of Virtue and Truth, and to ſupport our preſent Legal Eſtabliſhment; by ſhewing the Laity that they are free, both by the Laws of God and their Country, from all the wild and enthuſiaſtick Pretenſions of the High-flown Eccleſiaſticks: As I was willing alſo, not wholly to deſpair of being able to reſtore again the Apoſtate Clergymen to the Church of *England*, and to make them really of the Principles they ſwear to, pretend to monopolize, and yet conſtantly oppoſe;

ſo I ſhall have the utmoſt Pleaſure, if I can contribute to theſe great Ends, and ſhall rejoyce over ſuch an Occaſion to drop this Paper.

As the High Clergy can have no other Motive to purſue theſe Principles, but the temporal Intereſt of their Order, in oppoſition to Chriſtianity, and the apparent Laws of their Country; ſo I ſhall endeavour to convince them, that they are graſping at what they can never reach; and, with the Dog in the Fable, looſing a Subſtance to catch at a Shadow.

It was a Saying of the wiſe Lord *Halifax*, that Dr. *Echard*, in his Treatiſe of the *Contempt of the Clergy*, had omitted the *chief Cauſe* of it, namely, (not their Ignorance, but) *the Knowledge of the Laity*; and it is very true, that the Miſts of Superſtition and Fear, which have been ſo long raiſing before our Eyes, are pretty well diſſipated and diſpers'd; nor will an Horizontal Hat, a ſtarch'd Band, and long Petticoats, paſs in this Age for eſſential Marks of Wiſdom and Virtue.

The *Rehearſal* has long ſince told us, that the graveſt of all Beaſts is an *Aſs*, and the graveſt of all Birds is an *Owl*; and indeed the World ſeems generally of Opinion now, that ſound Senſe, polite Learning, good Breeding, and an eaſy and affable Converſation, are not only conſiſtent with true Religion, but are moſt productive of it; and ſure it cannot be denied, that the Laity, for the moſt part, exceed in theſe Qualities. They

They are resolv'd, at last, to see with their own Eyes, hear with their own Ears, and feel with their own Hands: *Ipse dixit* will pass no longer. It is a ridiculous Attempt to endeavour to deceive any one, who will not consent to be hood-wink'd: A Jade will not be put into an Horse-Mill, till she is blinded; nor could *Sampson* be led about and about by the *Philistines*, till they had put out his Eyes; therefore I would give my old Friends a Hint, tho' I doubt to little Purpose, namely, to change the Course of their Sailing, according to the shifting of the Winds and the Tides, and not run the Danger of Shipwreck upon those Coasts, where their Predecessors formerly found deep Water and safe Riding.

I am sensible, many of the High Church *Popish* Clergy will laugh in their Sleeves at this Advice, and think there is Folly enough yet left among the Laity, to support their Authority; and will hug themselves, and rejoice over the Ignorance of the Universities, the Stupidity of the drunken Squires, the Pannick of the tender Sex, and the never to be shaken Constancy of the *Mobility*; but I would put them in Mind, that all these fine Visions have once already misled and deceived them, and therefore may again.

I desire they will count their Gains, and recollect what Addition of Power they got, or were like to have got, by the late great Revolution of temporal Politicks, which they were so instru-

mental to bring about: Indeed they were called together, and had a Liberty given them to ſcold and quarrel with one another; but they were not ſuffered to hurt ſo much as a Mouſe; and even Mr. *Whiſton* laugh'd at them. Whilſt their Patrons were making their Court to *France* and the *Pretender*, for Preferments; the Lower-Houſe of *Convocation* was very uſefully employ'd and diverted, in compiling Forms of Prayer for conſecrating Church-Yards, and for Criminals who were to be hang'd; which, 'tis ſaid, a certain Great Perſon then call'd, *Throwing out a Barrel to the Whale.*

I am afraid, they are not well informed of what it much concerns them to know, namely, that even the *Tories* themſelves will not be Prieſt-ridden; and that thoſe amongſt them, who have any Senſe, laugh at High-Church Principles in private, tho' they bow to the Broachers of them, and ſeem to admire them in publick; of the Truth of which I my ſelf have been frequently a Witneſs: So that of whatever Importance they may ſeem to themſelves, they are, in Troth, but the Tools and Cats-Feet to the worſt of Men; are only employ'd to do their Drudgery, and run down their Game; and will ſcarce have for their Pains even the picking of the Bones, when (like Jackals) they have hunted down the Lyon's Prey.

I ſhould not have thought my ſelf at Liberty to have unburthen'd my Mind thus freely,

freely, if it had not been to have ſerved ſome of my Friends among theſe High-Church Clergy, by helping them to a little of that Underſtanding, which is not to be learn'd in Univerſities, and in Converſation with one another; and I wiſh, (tho' I cannot hope, much leſs perſwade my ſelf to believe) that when they have duly conſider'd what I have ſaid, they will change their Style, and endeavour to atone for all the Miſchiefs they have hitherto done, by being hereafter Advocates for Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Liberty; will make uſe of the Influence they have over the poor deluded Mobility, to promote true Religion, as well as Peace and Happineſs, amongſt Mankind; and be no longer the Boutefeus or Incendiaries of every popular Faction and Tumult. *Which God, of his infinite Mercy, grant,* &c.

NUMBER XVII.

Wedneſday, May 11. 1720.

Reaſons *why the* High-Church Prieſts *are the moſt* Wicked *of all* Men.

IT ſeems natural and reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that Clergymen, who have a learned, ingenuous, and Chriſtian Education; who are bred up in ſtrict Diſcipline; who in their Youth ſtudy the Works of *PLATO, ARISTOTLE, CICERO,* and other Heathen Moraliſts; as alſo the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, which they believe to be divinely inſpir'd; who attend daily Prayers, and frequent Sacraments; who pretend to have a Call from the *Holy Ghoſt, to teach* the World; who ſpend a great Part of their Time in compoſing divine Diſcourſes or Sermons; who are obliged to Pray and Converſe daily with Weak, Sick, and ſcrupulous Pariſhioners, about heavenly Matters; who, by Converſation and cloſe Union

Union with one another at Viſitations, and other holy Meetings, and (I preſume) by Prayers together, have great Opportunities of improving themſelves in Virtue and Godlineſs; and who are under a particular Obligation to ſet good Examples, and under a ſort of Neceſſity to obſerve ſome Decorum; ſhould be *better*, than other Men. But yet, it is a Matter of common Obſervation, that they are not ſo; almoſt all in the *Roman* Church, and too many in other Churches, being notoriouſly guilty in an eminent Degree of thoſe Vices, which are of moſt pernicious or moſt extenſive ill Conſequences, and moſt Anti-Chriſtian; ſuch as Ambition, Pride, Anger, Hatred, Malice, Revenge, Litigiouſneſs, Uncharitableneſs, Hypocriſy, Perſecution, Sedition, Treaſon, Equivocation, and Perjury; (whereof Multitudes of the Laity are not only wholly innocent, but remarkable for the Virtues oppoſite to them;) to ſay nothing of their equal Guilt with other Men in reſpect to the inferior Vices of Swearing, Drunkenneſs, and ſuch like. And this Fact is honeſtly confeſs'd by the late Biſhop of *Sarum*, who in his *Memoirs* (which we expect ſoon to ſee publiſh'd, with the utmoſt Impatience) tells us, that *he always believes well of Laymen, till he ſees Cauſe to change* his *Mind; tho', as to Churchmen, it is otherwiſe with* him: *for* he *has ſeen ſo much amiſs in that Profeſſion, that* he *is inclin'd always to think ill of them, till* he *ſees Cauſe to think otherwiſe.* Where-

Whereupon, it is a frequent Subject of Inquiry, how it comes to paſs, or what are the Cauſes of this Fact, which would never be credited if it was not very manifeſt. Some are at a Loſs about this Matter; but, for my Part, I am not. And the *Fact* is no more ſurprizing to me, than are other *common Facts* concerning Men; which, by being *common*, muſt have plain and manifeſt Cauſes. The *Cauſes* of this *Fact*, in particular, are ſo plain to me, that from the mere Conſideration of *them*, I ſhould wonder if I found the Clergy better than they are; and I eſteem thoſe Cauſes to be ſo neceſſarily productive of their Effect, that I do not think it Preſumption to pretend to know the Doings of the *High Clergy* in all Ages to have been wicked, even without *Hiſtory* or *Teſtimony*, which are requiſite to give us the Knowledge of other Mens Crimes. *GROTIUS*'s Obſervation,* *qui legit Hiſtoriam Eccleſiaſticam, quid legit niſi vitia Epiſcoporum?* muſt be true, and juſtly apply'd to all other Clergy as well as the Chriſtian.

It is not the Deſign of this Paper, to aſſign the general Cauſes of this Fact, or all the particular Cauſes, which render ſo *many* of our Clergy ſo bad as they are. That Subject I reſerve for a Treatiſe by it ſelf. I ſhall at preſent only aſſign ſome of thoſe Cauſes, which I conceive to have the moſt

* Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, *nothing elſe but a Detail of the Villanies of Prieſts.*

direct

direct Influence on the Morals of ſo many of our Clergy.

Youth is the great Opportunity of Life, which ſettleth and fixeth moſt Men either in a good or bad Courſe; and the Impreſſions, eſpecially bad Impreſſions, then made, are uſually laſting. Youth is alſo a Time of Innocence, when Men have Horror for Vice, which they never commit at firſt without offering Violence to themſelves. The firſt and moſt natural Thoughts of Man are to be Honeſt, and Juſt, and Reaſonable, as the beſt Things he can do for his own Sake; and it is the Influence of ill Example, and of the common Practice of the World, which, for the moſt Part, changes his Sentiments, and puts him upon ill Actions. But the natural Innocence of Youth being once broke in upon, Man by Degrees grows harden'd and impudent in Wickedneſs, and commits it without Shame or Remorſe.

Nothing therefore has ſo direct a Tendency to debauch the World, as to debauch the Youth: And the earlier, the more effectual; for thereby Innocence and Virtue may be ſo effac'd, as in a little Time to leave no Memory or Trace of them, no more than *QUARTILLA* in *PETRONIUS ARBITER* had, who, tho' a young Woman, *did not remember that ſhe had ever been a Maid.*

Now, it ſeems to me peculiar to the Clergy, in moſt Parts of *Chriſtendom*, to begin the

the World with the greateſt Breach upon the natural Honeſty and Integrity of Youth, and with the greateſt Violence upon their own Conſciences, that can be imagin'd; as will be evident from the following Particulars.

1. Firſt, the Youth who are ſent to Univerſities, are early initiated into Perjury, by being obliged to take College-Oaths, in ſome reſpects impertinent or ridiculous, in others wicked, or impoſſible to be kept; by which Means, Falſe Swearing becomes familiar to them, and they eſteem Oaths only as Matters of Form, and their Breach to be but common Qualifications for Preferment.

2. Secondly, When they go into *Holy Orders*, they profeſs, that they *are inwardly mov'd by the Holy Ghoſt to take upon them* their *Office*: tho' nothing is more notorious, than that many are *inwardly mov'd* by the Proſpect of Power and Wealth, and by Neceſſity of a Maintenance; and that many uſe all the Arts and Means, to no Purpoſe, to procure to themſelves Law and Phyſick Fellowſhips in Colleges, and other Lay-Preferments, (where no Engagements contrary to their Judgments and Conſciences are requiſite) in order to avoid the Burden of going into Orders: And by Conſequence, that they feel no *inward Motions of the Holy Ghoſt*; unleſs he can be ſuppos'd conſtantly to concur juſt as ſerves the Purpoſes of Men engag'd in the Purſuit of their Temporal Intereſts. Here then is a ſolemn Lye and Proſtitution

titution of the Conſcience, in all thoſe who do not feel themſelves mov'd by the Holy Ghoſt.

3. Thirdly, Many of the Clergy Abroad ſubſcribe *Articles of Religion*, which they do not believe. Mr. *WHISTON* (*Eſſays*, &c. *p.* 237.) ſays, he *believes there is ſcarce one Clergyman, even of our reformed Church, that has conſider'd and examin'd Things with any Care, who believes all the* 39 *Articles in their proper and original Meaning.* This implies, that the Unbelievers, among the Clergy, of the *Articles*, are very numerous; unleſs it be ſuppos'd, that few of the Clergy *conſider and examine Things, with any Care.* But the Thing is manifeſt from the *Sophiſtry* and *Knavery* uſed by many of them to palliate their Subſcription to the Articles; which imply, that they do not believe thoſe *Articles.* (1.) Some pretend to ſubſcribe them as Articles, which, tho' in Part erroneous, they oblige themſelves not to contradict. (2.) Some pretend to ſubſcribe them in any Senſe, wherein they can underſtand them according to the Rules of Grammar. (3.) Some pretend to ſubſcribe them in any Senſe, wherein they can reconcile them to Scripture. (4.) And others chuſe the Senſe, they pretend to ſubſcribe them in, out of the ſeveral Senſes they ſuppoſe intended to be held forth by the ſame Articles. And I wiſh more of them pretended to ſubſcribe them honeſtly and fairly, *viz.* in the Senſe really

really intended by the Impoſers, who, to *prevent Diverſity of Opinions*, impoſe their own Senſe, as *agreeable to Scripture*; and therefore cannot be ſuppoſed to have intended, that the *Articles* ſhould differ from all other Writings, which all Readers endeavour to underſtand in the one Meaning intended by the Authors. Nay, to ſubſcribe the *Articles* without believing them, is ſo reputable among the High-Church Prieſts, that a fair Subſcriber, that is, one who ſubſcribes in the one Senſe he ſuppoſes originally intended, paſſes amongſt them for the worſt of Men, *viz.* a *Presbyterian*, and an Enemy to the Church.

4. Fourthly, Every Clergyman inſtituted into any Benefice, *ſwears*, *That* he *has made no ſimoniacal Payment, Contract or Promiſe, directly or indirectly, by* himſelf, *or by any other, to* his *Knowledge, or with* his *Conſent, to any Perſon or Perſons whatſoever, for or concerning the procuring and obtaining of his Eccleſiaſtical Dignity, Place, Preferment, Office or Living*, (reſpectively and particularly naming the ſame whereunto he is to be admitted, inſtituted, collated, inſtall'd, or confirm'd) *nor will at any Time hereafter perform or ſatisfy any ſuch kind of Payment, Contract or Promiſe, made by any other, without* his *Knowledge or Conſent: So help* him *God, thro' JESUS CHRIST.* Now, whether any of them break this Oath, I leave to the Conſideration of the Reader, who ought to eſteem

eſteem all Clergymen taking it guilty, that either make Preſents to any Body, or Marry, or compound with the Patron about Tythes, in order to get the Benefice; no leſs than thoſe, who, by Bargain, pay Money before or after the Benefice is procur'd, are guilty.

5. Fifthly, An Oath of Allegiance to his Majeſty King *GEORGE* is taken by all Benefic'd Clergymen; who may be juſtly deem'd perjur'd, if they do not pay the ſame Regard to his Majeſty, which they pretend to have been due to King *CHARLES* the Firſt, or Second; or to Queen *ANNE*, at the Beginning and latter End of her Reign. The Popularity and Credit, to which this Perjury intitles the High-Church Clergy among one another, and the Diſgrace attending thoſe who are faithful to the Oaths they have taken, (the former being dubb'd by them *Honeſt Men*, and good Churchmen, for breaking their Oaths; and the latter *Rogues* and Betrayers of the Church, for keeping them;) leave us no Room to doubt, but the Perjured of this Kind are but too numerous. However, I am willing to think it would be Injuſtice to ſay, that many Laymen need not go out of their own Pariſhes, to find one at leaſt, and often more, where there are Lecturers and Curates.

The Difficulty therefore mention'd in the Beginning of this Paper, admits of a plain Solution; and it is as eaſy to conceive, that

that Men, who begin the World in this Manner, ſhould exceed others in Wickedneſs; who either begin the World innocently, or are under no neceſſity to begin it wickedly; as it is to conceive, that Butchers and Soldiers ſhould be leſs Humane than others, or that young Women, once proſtituted, ſhould loſe all Modeſty.

NUMBER XVIII.

Wedneſday, May 18. 1720.

A general Idea *of* Prieſtcraft.

I Have, in my Eighth and other Papers, vindicated the Almighty from the Imputation of Obſcurity in revealing his Will to Mankind; and ſhewn, that he is plain, exact, and even circumſtantial, when he delivers his Precepts to them. I ſhall now expoſe the contrary Proceedings of weak and corrupt Men; by giving a general Idea of the principal Arts, by which the deſigning Prieſts of all Religi-

ons

ons have kept their Craft and Impoſtures from a Diſcovery, and made the Truth, as far as they could, inacceſſible.

Every mad Action, or Principle in Religion and Government, muſt have ſome appearing Cauſe aſſign'd for it, proper to make the People ſtare, and to hide the true one. Mankind, as tame as Prieſts and Tyrants have made them, will not be content to be deceiv'd or butcher'd, without having a Reaſon for it. The Pope, who aſſumes a Power to judge for all Men, and devotes whole Nations to Damnation and Maſſacre, and ſends People to Heaven or Hell in Colonies, juſt as their Money or Diſobedience determines him, acts a very conſiſtent Part in tying the Keys of both Worlds to his Girdle, and in ſtiling himſelf God's abſolute *Vicar General.* Theſe are *his* Reaſons; and the Catholick and more Orthodox Parts of *Europe* are well content with them.

In former Reigns, when many of our *Engliſh* Clergy thought fit to tye us Hand and Foot, and deliver us over to our Kings, as their proper Goods and Chattels, to be fed or flay'd according to their *ſacred* Will and Pleaſure, they told us, it was the Ordinance of God, that one Man might glut his Luſt, or his Cruelty, with the Deſtruction of Millions, and if we kept out of Harm's Way, we were aſſuredly damned. And Theſe were *their* Reaſons then. Of late, it is true, many of them have changed their Doctrine

and their Behaviour. We are, it ſeems, *at preſent*, living in the Guilt of Rebellion, which is a damnable Sin; and ſo we are to rebel upon Pain of Damnation, to free our ſelves from the Damnation which follows Rebellion. Theſe are their Reaſons *now*.

Formerly, when ſome certain Perſons were content to be Proteſtants, the Church of *Rome* was the *Spiritual Babylon*, and the *Scarlet Whore*, and *Sodom*; and the *Pope* was *Anti-Chriſt*; for he ſate in the Temple of God, and exalted himſelf above all that is called God. But this was Truth, and could not hold long, conſidering into whoſe Hands it was fallen; and therefore in a little Time, when they had a Mind to get into the Pope's Place, and to do and ſay as he did, the Church of *Rome* became all of a ſudden *a true Church*, and an *old Church*, and *our Mother Church*. In ſhort, the *old withered Harlot and Mother of Whoredoms* grew a great Beauty, and *her Daughter* here in *England* reſembled her *Mamma* more and more every Day ſhe lived, and gave the foregoing Reaſons for it.

From hence it is plain, that tho' for every Impoſture ſome Cauſe muſt be aſſigned, yet a very indifferent one will ſerve the Turn. The Groſs of the World are dull and credulous: Few make any Enquiry at all, and fewer make ſucceſsful ones. It is, however, ſtill beſt if the Cheat ſtands upon ſuch a Foun-

Foundation, that it cannot be ſearched nor examined by any *Human Eye.*

When *Numa Pompilius* told the *Romans*, that he converſed familiarly with the Nymph *Egeria*; which of them could pay her a Viſit, and ask her whether the Prince and ſhe were in Earneſt ſuch very good Neighbours? And when *Mahomet* took ſuch a wide Range thro' the other World, upon his Nag *Elborach*, and told Wonders at his Return; there was neither Man nor Horſe in all *Arabia*, that could take the ſame Journey to diſprove him: Or when he was pleaſed to be thought converſant with the Angel *Gabriel*, I do not hear that ever the Angel ſigned a Certificate that they were no wiſe acquainted. The Quack, who had found out the true *Fern Seed* and the *Green Dragon*, thought it, no doubt, a hard Matter to prove him a Lyar.

In the Heathen Temples of old, neither the *Sybils*, nor any other Prieſts or Belchers of Propheſy, Male or Female, were anſwerable for the Oracles and dark Sayings they utter'd. They had what they ſaid from God, who never once contradicted them. It was impoſſible to come at him for perſonal Information; and a very profane Crime not to believe his Prieſt; and to diſtruſt the Deity himſelf, was *almoſt* as bad: You had nothing to do but to *captivate your Reaſon to your Faith*, and ſwallow the *Verbum Sacerdotis*. If you did not, the Judgment of the God,

that is, the Anger of his Prieſt was ſure to purſue you.

The ſame Policy has been ever practis'd by the Deluders of Mankind in all Names and Shapes. They have always entrench'd themſelves behind the Ramparts of Myſtery, Uncertainties and Terrors. The *Romiſh* Clergy maintain all their Pretenſions and Power by Doctrines, which are calculated to make the People either wonder or tremble. And when a Man has loſt his Courage and his Underſtanding, you may eaſily cheat or terrify him into as tractable an Animal as the Creation affords. The Doctrines of Purgatory, and of the Prieſts Power to forgive or damn, are alone ſtrong enough to frighten moſt Folks into what Liberality and Submiſſion the Church thinks fit to demand of them. And we all know that ſhe is not over-modeſt upon ſuch Occaſions. *Bring me all thou haſt, and follow me*, is her Stile.

I wiſh I could keep theſe Impoſtures and wild Claims altogether out of *England*, and confine them to Popiſh and Infidel Countries only: But that which is obvious and avowed cannot be hid. Very many of our High Jacobite Clergy aim at Dominion by the ſame wicked Means, and hood-wink and alarm us all they can. They lead us out of the Road of Reaſon, and play their Engines in the Dark; and all the Illumination we can get from them is, that we are all in a Miſt. Without their Guidance we go aſtray,

and

and with it we go blindfold. All their Arguments are fetched from their own Authority. Their Aſſertions are no leſs than Rules and Laws to us; and where they lead we muſt follow, tho' into Darkneſs and Servitude. If we grow wilful, and break looſe from our Orthodox Ignorance, we are purſued with hard Names and Curſes. Doubting is Infidelity, and Reaſon is Atheiſm. What can we do in this Caſe? There is no Medium berween a Blockhead and a Schiſmatick; if we follow them blindly, we are the Firſt; and the Second, if we leave them. We want Faith, if we will not take their Word; and we want Eyes, if we do.

They indeed give a Sugar-Plumb, and refer us to the Bible for Proof of all that they ſay. But, in Truth, this Privilege, if we examine it, will appear none at all; but, on the contrary, an errant Bite, and groſs Mockery. For when they have ſent us to a Text, will they allow us to conſtrue it our ownWay? No ſuch Matter: they have nailed a Meaning to it, and will permit it to bear no other. You may read, provided you read with *their Spectacles*; and examine their Propoſitions *freely*, provided you take them every one for granted. You may exert your Reaſon fully, but be ſure let it be to no Purpoſe; and uſe your Underſtanding independently, under their abſolute Direction and Controul. I wonder how theſe Men could ever have the Front to accuſe the

Church of *Rome* for locking up the Bible in an unknown Tongue!

The eternal War that they wage againſt Reaſon, which they uſe juſt as they do Scripture, is founded upon good Policy; but it is pleaſant to obſerve their Manner of attacking it. They reaſon againſt Reaſon, uſe Reaſon againſt the Uſe of Reaſon, and ſhew, from very good Reaſon, that Reaſon is good for nothing. When they think it on their own Side, then they apply all its Aids to convince or confound thoſe who dare to think without their Concurrence: Therefore, in their Controverſies about Religion, they frequently appeal to Reaſon; but we muſt not accept the Appeal, for if our Reaſon be not their Reaſon, it is no Reaſon. They uſe it, or the Appearance of it, againſt all Men; but no Man muſt uſe it againſt them. As there is no ſuch Thing as arguing and perſwading without the Aſſiſtance of Reaſon, it is a little abſurd, if not ungrateful, in theſe Gentlemen, to decry it at the ſame Time that they are employing it, to turn the Batteries of Reaſon againſt Reaſon, and make it ſelf deſtroy it ſelf.

Neither Scripture, therefore, nor Reaſon, by theſe Rules ſignify any Thing, till the Prieſts have explain'd them, and made them ſignify ſomething; and the Word of God is not the Word of God, till they have declared its Senſe, and made it ſo. Thus, by the Time that Scripture and Reaſon have been

modelled

modelled, and qualified, and cooked up by the High-Church Jacobite Clergy, they are neither Scripture nor Reaſon; but a perfect *French Diſh*, or what the Spiritual Cooks pleaſe; an Oleo or Hodg-Podge of Nonſenſe, Jargon and Authority.

From all that has been ſaid, the following Concluſions may be drawn: Such Clergymen as I have been above deſcribing, prove every Thing by aſſerting it, and make any Pretence ſupport any Claim. They build Syſtems upon pretended Facts, and argue from Propoſitions which are either highly improbable, or certainly falſe. When they cannot convince, they confound us; and when they cannot perſwade, they terrify. We have but Two Ways to try the Truth of their Doctrines, and the Validity of their Demands, namely, *Reaſon* and *Revelation*; and they deprive us of Both, by making the One dark and the Other dangerous.

What a Contempt muſt this Tribe have for Mankind!

NUMBER XIX.

Wednesday, May 25. 1720.

Eccleſiaſtical Authority, *as claim'd by the* High Clergy, *an* Enemy to Religion.

SINCE there are ſo many different Opinions and Apprehenſions in the World about Matters of Religion; and every Sect and Party does with ſo much Confidence pretend, that *they*, and *they only*, are in the Truth; the great Difficulty and Queſtion is, by what Means Men may be ſecured from dangerous Errors and Miſtakes in Religion? For this End ſome have thought it neceſſary, that there ſhould be *an Infallible Church*, in the Communion whereof every Man may be ſecured from the Dangers of a wrong Belief: And others have thought it neceſſary, that their ſeveral *fallible Churches* ſhould have *Authority in Matters of Faith*, in order to keep up

up a right Faith in the People of the Fundamentals of Religion.

But it ſeems God has not thought either neceſſary: If he had, he would have reveal-ed himſelf more plainly in this Matter, than in any particular Point of Faith whatſoever. He would have told us expreſly and in the plaineſt Words, that he had appointed *an Infallible Guide and Judge in Matters of Religion, or Men* who ſhould have *Authority in Matters of Faith*; and would likewiſe have plainly mark'd out him or them, for Men to have had Recourſe to on all Occaſions; be-cauſe our Belief depending on this *infallible Judge*, or on theſe *Men* who had *Authority*, we could not be ſafe from Miſtake in parti-cular Points, without ſo plain and clear a Revelation of this Infallible Judge, or of theſe *Men* who had *Authority*, that there could be no Miſtake about him or them; nor could there be an End of any other Controverſies in Religion, unleſs this Matter of *an infalli-ble Judge*, or of *Men* who had *Authority*, were out of our Controverſy.

It is not pretended by any Advocates of *Infallibility* or *Authority*, that God has deli-vered the Matter expreſly and plainly in the Scriptures. They proceed, and build only on Inferences and Deductions from thence: And the Papiſts are divided among them-ſelves as to the Seat and Extent of *Infallibi-lity*; as the *Proteſtant-Papiſts* are, in reſpect to the Seat and Extent of *Authority*. And both

both *Infallibility* and *Authority* are manifeſtly abſurd Pretences in Point of Reaſon; tho' *Infallibility* ſeems leſs abſurd than *Authority*. The Pretence of *Infallibility* is plainly abſurd; becauſe the *Infallible Church* gives conſtant and daily Proofs of its Fallibility: And the Pretence of *Authority* is abſurd; becauſe, that may lead Men into any Miſtakes whatſoever. But, as I obſerved, *Infallibility* is leſs abſurd; becauſe that is of a Piece, and conſiſtent with, and neceſſarily follows from *Authority*: Whereas *Authority* without *Infallibility*, ſuppoſes *a Power given Men by God* to lead the World into any Miſtakes, and to ſubvert Chriſtianity it ſelf. But however this be, they are both ſufficiently ridiculous; and it is ridiculous to ſend Men, in order to their Salvation, to believe either in the *Pope*, or Dr. *Swift*, or Dr. *Burgeſs*, on whoſe Authority, if Men depend, they can only be *Papiſts*, or *Swiftites*, or *Burgeſites*, and not Chriſtians.

If then God has not provided an *infallible Judge*, nor any *Men* with *Authority* in Matters of Religion; there is ſome other Way whereby Men may be ſecur'd againſt all dangerous Errors and Miſtakes in Religion, and whereby they may diſcern all ſuch Truths as are neceſſary to their Salvation. Now that Way our Saviour has declared to us in theſe Words, *If any Man deſire to do his Will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf*: that is, if

a Man has an honeſt and ſincere Mind, and a hearty Deſire to do the Will of God, he has the beſt Preſervative againſt dangerous Miſtakes in Matters of Religion; and God, or his Underſtanding, will enable him to diſtinguiſh ſufficiently, whether Doctrines be of God or Men, and will conduct him into all neceſſary Truths.

This is a true and plain Anſwer to the Queſtion propoſed; and alſo true and plain Religion, or Chriſtianity, if Men will be govern'd by *CHRIST*, the *Author and Finiſher* thereof. This is eaſy to be known, and requires little Time to learn. This frees Men from all Concern about the intricate and endleſs Squabbles of Divines, diſputing which of them are to have *Authority*, and wherein their own *Authority* conſiſts; and ought to ſet them at Eaſe; for, as Chriſtians, or Followers of *CHRIST*, they have nothing to do to enquire, what Prieſts are to have an Anti-chriſtian Authority over one another and the Laity.

But notwithſtanding the Plainneſs of the Caſe, it is no Wonder that weak People now a Days ſhould believe in Prieſts, and not in Chriſt; ſhould be Prieſtlings, and not Chriſtians; when, in our Bleſſed Saviour's own Time, the *Jews* were ready to believe in any Impoſtors, and averſe to believing in him, as he himſelf tells us. *I am come*, ſays he, *in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not; if Another ſhall come in his own Name, him*

him ye will receive; how can you believe, which receive Honour one of another? That is, (to make a ſort of Application to our preſent Times) " you have the Bible among you, " wherein I teach you in my Father's Name, " wherein I bid you ſearch, and examine and " try all Things for your ſelves, and to call " no Man *Maſter* in Religion upon Earth: " That Bible you reject, in not underſtand- " ing it for your ſelves; but if any Man " ſet up for an Authoritative Interpreter of " it, him you will receive for your *Maſter*, " and call your ſelves after his Name. How " can you be Believers in, and Followers " of me, who believe upon the Authority " of Men, and reject the Authority of " God?

Chriſtianity, or Religion, thus truly underſtood, has too many Enemies to make it loſt Labour to prove it true by Arguments. And therefore I obſerve, in Proof of our Saviour's Doctrine, *That a hearty Deſire and Endeavour to do the Will of God, is the beſt Preſervative againſt dangerous Miſtakes*; Firſt, that therein our Saviour recommends the beſt and moſt proper Diſpoſition of Mind to qualify a Man to receive Truths from God, and to enable him to make a right Judgment as to what proceeds from God, and what from Men. For a good Man is moſt likely to have right Apprehenſions of God and Divine Things. Secondly, ſuch a Diſpoſition in a Man ſuppoſes his Impar-

tiality

tiality in the Search of Truth; that he has no Partiality to any particular Doctrine; and that he is ſuperior to the Temptations of any Paſſions, (which blind the Mind) and has no Reaſon to deceive himſelf by receiving Things without Evidence; nor Inclination to reject what has Evidence. Thirdly, God will not ſuffer the beſt diſpos'd Minds to fall into dangerous Miſtakes; but will, as he ſays himſelf, *guide* them *in Judgment*, and *ſhew* them his *Way*. Again, God ſays by *SOLOMON*, *If thou incline thine Ear unto Wiſdom, and apply thy Heart to Underſtanding; yea, if thou cryeſt after Knowledge, and lifteſt up thy Voice for Underſtanding; if thou ſeekeſt her as Silver, and ſearcheſt for her as for hid Treaſure; then ſhalt thou underſtand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God.* Indeed, the Bible is ſo plain, as to all neceſſary Truths, that he that runs may read; and a Day-Labourer cannot fail of finding Truth, that ſearches it *there*; and is in no Danger of failing, unleſs he delivers himſelf up abſolutely to ſome *Guide* to interpret the Bible for him. Fourthly, and Laſtly, living honeſtly, and ſeeking after Truth, are the beſt Things a Man can do, and the very Perfection of his Nature; and by Conſequence all that God, who is a good and reaſonable Being, can require of him.

I ſhall conclude this Paper, which I have written in Behalf of Chriſtianity, and againſt Antichriſtianiſm, with another Divine Say-

ing

ing of our Bleſſed Saviour: *He that ſpeaketh of himſelf, ſeeks his own Glory; but he that ſeeks his Glory that ſent him, the ſame is true, and no Unrighteouſneſs is in him.* As if he had ſaid, "Hereby you may diſtinguiſh One "that comes from God from an Impoſtor. "If any Man *ſeeks* his own *Glory* and *Au-* "*thority*, you may conclude, *God has not* "*ſent him*; but, whatever he pretends, that "he *ſpeaks of himſelf*, preaches himſelf, and "from himſelf; but he that *ſeeks* the Honour "of God, and not his own Intereſt, Advan- "tage and Authority, by directing Men to "the Authority of God alone, that Man has "no Falſhood, no Deſign to deceive; you "may conclude him to be no Deceiver or "Impoſtor."

NUMBER XX.

Wedneſday, June 1. 1720.

Of CHAPLAINS.

AS between the ſeveral Acts of the moſt grave and ſolemn Tragedies, it is allowed to divert the Company with a Dance or a Song; ſo in this Paper, I ſhall deſcend to entertain my Readers with a Diſſertation upon *Chaplains*, who are a Sort of expenſive Domeſticks, which none but great Families can entertain. How or when this venerable Piece of Houſehold-Stuff became firſt in Uſe, is not certainly determined, that I know of; but it is certain, that he is left entirely out of the Roll of Eccleſiaſtical Officers mentioned in the New Teſtament; his Uſe and Importance being not thought of, or forgot to be mentioned by St. *Paul*, though not by Mr. *Collier*, who has ſupplied the Omiſſion of the Apoſtle, and diſcovered them.

It

It is likely that *Chaplains* were first invented and brought into Fashion, in the dark and barbarous Ages; and so Custom has continued what Ignorance began. To these Days of Darkness is owing the marvellous Encrease of lazy Monks and cheating Friers; in which black Swarm of Reverend Idlers, probably, first crept in this *Supernumerary Levite*. It is well known, that worthless and designing Priests have always advanced and nourished Superstition, being very sensible that it would in return nourish and multiply *them*; that Priestcraft and Bigotry beget each other, and being so near a-Kin, perpetually maintain the mutual Relation.

The Office of a *Chaplain* is, according to Mr. *Collier*, to Pray for, Bless, and give Absolution to those he is concerned for — "All "which, *says he*, are Acts of Authority and "Jurisdiction." If *this* last Assertion be true, it is enough to destroy all Charity; since at this rate of Reasoning, I ought to be afraid of throwing a Farthing to an Alms-woman, lest she would be thereby provoked to Pray for and Bless me, and by that Means acquire Jurisdiction over me. And who would not rather deny his Charity, than give away his Liberty?

To shew that Mr. *Collier* is very much in earnest in bestowing this same Authority upon this his *Domestick Parson*, he puts a Rod in his Hand against the Master of the Family himself, whom, it seems, it is his Right to counsel,

counſel, exhort and reprove; which Offices, he ſays, are "inconſiſtent with the Condition "of a Servant." The Chaplain therefore is in the firſt Place a much Wiſer Man, as well as a more Holy, than my Lord is; and in the ſecond Place, it is his Duty to owe my Lord no Duty at all in the Capacity of a Servant to a Superior.

After he has put the Clergy in "joint Com-"miſſion with the Angels themſelves," as he ſays God has done, it is no Wonder that he will not allow the meaneſt of them to be any Man's Servant, how great ſoever. He therefore reaſons againſt the 13*th* of *Henry* VIII. becauſe it calls the *Patrons of Chaplains their Maſters.* If ſome of them "formerly "were Stewards and Clerks of the Kitchen "to People of Diſtinction," as he ſays Biſhop *Latimer* complains ſome of them were forced to be in his Time; I cannot ſee for all that how they could, according to Mr. *Collier*, ſuffer by it in their Dignity and Reputations; becauſe, for as good Reaſons as before, their gathering the Rent and going to Market for Proviſion, might give them *Juriſdiction* over the Perſon who employed them. I cannot therefore join with ſome of the *Criticks* in cenſuring the Author of the *Scornful Lady*, for diſpatching *Parſon Roger* in a Morning, with his Basket under his Arm, to ſcour the Rooſts and gather Eggs; the ſame being a primitive Branch of his Office, if we may believe the aforeſaid Biſhop.

But though " People miſapprehending the " Prieſt's Office, entertain a *Chaplain* upon " the ſame Account they do their Footmen; " only to garniſh the Table and ſtuff out the " Figure of the Family"; (*Collier*'s Eſſays, part 1. p. 204, 205.) yet " for a Patron to " account ſuch a *Conſecrated Perſon his* Prieſt, " as if he belonged to him as a Servant, is, " in effect, to challenge divine Honours, and " to ſet himſelf up for a God, (*p.* 207.) Mr. *Leſlie* puts the ſame Thing ſtronger, in fewer Words, and will not ſuffer any Man (Prince or Subject) to ſay, *my Parſon*, or *my Chaplain*, in any other Senſe than we ſay, *my King*, or *my God*.

So that, in the Sentiments of theſe Reverend Gentlemen, every one who hires a Chaplain, hires a Maſter. Take Warning then, O ye rich Men, Nobles, and Princes of the Earth; and due Submiſſion and Allegiance pay unto theſe your *Spiritual Sovereigns*, whom you have taken into your Service to be your *Superiors*; and to whom you give *Bread* and *Wages* to exerciſe DOMINION over you.

After all, Mr. *Collier* is ſo good as to allow " the Maſter of the Family, in the Ab- " ſence of the Prieſt, to ſupply his Place, as " far as *lawfully he may*, that is, in Praying " and giving Thanks at Meat," (*p.* 200.) But he muſt not Pray to God to Bleſs his Family, and to forgive them their Sins; for this would be to *Uſurp* the *Authority* of *his Lord*, the *Chaplain*.

Before

Before I have done with Mr. *Collier*, I would ask him one Queſtion, and that is, Whether the Chaplains of Biſhops are of the ſame ſuperior Importance and Authority with the Chaplains of Laymen; becauſe the Biſhops themſelves are qualified to be their own Chaplains; if the ſaying of Domeſtick Prayers, and Bleſſing their own Table, is allowed by him to be conſiſtent with their Eccleſiaſtical Dignity.

Milton, though otherwiſe a Man of great Parts and Merit, yet wanting either the Senſe or the Grace to ſee the Uſefulneſs and Excellency of theſe adopted Sovereigns, ſpeaks of them with too much Contempt. He ſays, that "in State perhaps they may be liſted "among the upper ſerving Men of ſome "great Houſhold, and be admitted to ſome "ſuch Place as may ſtile them the Sewers or "the Yeomen Uſhers of Devotion, where the "Maſter is too reſty, or too rich, to ſay his "own Prayers, or to Bleſs his own Table." (*Vol.* 2. of his Works in Folio. *p.* 509.)

But this was the Caſe only in his Time, for a *Chaplain* now a-days is looked upon as a more honourable Piece of Furniture. After a Coach and Six, the next Trappings of Domeſtick Grandeur, are a Page, Plate and a Parſon. He ſwells the Houſhold Pomp and Luxury, and is often taken for Pride more than Prayers. Formerly, his Appetite was uncourteouſly reſtrained; he was only permitted to riot in Roaſt Beef; and Sir *Scrape*

and the firſt Courſe were removed together. But now he has better Luck, having, for the moſt part, obtained a general Toleration for Cuſtard.

Nor are the Times mended with Mr. *Chaplain* in one Inſtance only: In Days of Yore he was humbly content with *Abigail*, and my Lady's Woman was thought a ſuitable Match for the *Houſhold Prieſt*, (as Mr. *Collier* Chriſtens him) but *now* he does not make *that uſe* of her, but leaves her, and flies at higher Game. If my Lady is ſingle, the Doctor has a Chance for making his Fortune; and when he cannot marry her, he can ſome times ſell her: of which I could give Inſtances, but for the regard which I bear to the *Quality* and the *Prieſthood*. If my Lady be already married, he has ſtill Happineſs and good Fortune in his Eye, provided ſhe be but Young; and even though ſhe is Old, provided ſhe be Superſtitious and Bigotted: So that whether her Perſon is agreeable, or her Underſtanding crazy, he has his Ends; for he has a *Parſon*'s *Barn*, and nothing comes amiſs.

It muſt be owned farther, that a *Chaplain* in a Great Family is a uſeful Body for moſt Purpoſes except that of his Function: He is often a facetious Perſon, and his Jokes and Puns keep the upper Part of the Family in a good Mood; for, as to the *Inferior*, he deigns not to ſpeak to them, unleſs to inſult them, and thereby teach them the great Reſpect that they owe him. He morever graciouſly condeſcends

deſcends to pry into all the Actions and Behaviour of the Servants, by which he keeps them in Obedience and Fear, at leaſt of himſelf.

Scire volunt ſecreta domus atque inde timeri.

Beſides, he is ſo courteous, that he meddles with all Family Affairs, unasked; and interpoſes with his Counſel and Authority, unthanked. From hence it comes, that he and the Steward can never agree: For the Steward (like a ſawcy Layman, as he is) will be pretending to know his own Buſineſs as well as Mr. *Chaplain*, who is a *Conſecrated Perſon*. The Family is therefore eternally divided into Two Factions between them; but the *Doctor* has the Secret of ſecuring the Women on his Side, and ſo always gets the Better.

The Doctor is likewiſe a conſiderable Perſon for divers other Arts and Accompliſhments. He throws a Bowl with more Skill, and follows it with more Activity, than any Man (not in Orders) upon the Green. He is alſo a truſty Toper in the Family: He has an uncommon Palate in the Diſcernment of Liquors, and an uncommon Zeal for their Conſumption. Nor is his great Dexterity at Whisk of trivial Moment: His Talent in this Branch of his Duty is ſo ſignal, that my Lady ſeldoms fails chuſing, or rather requiring him for her own Partner, if he is not already ſnapped up by the Daughter for her's.

After all this, who can wonder that our *Houſhold Prieſt* holds up his Head, and adores himſelf? He is an hourly Witneſs of his own Importance and Figure; and finding himſelf an extraordinary Body, it is nothing ſtrange that he demands extraordinary Treatment. As little to be admired is the Erectneſs of his Mien, and the dignified Primneſs of his Manner; how elſe ſhould he be himſelf, and differ from all other Men? His Authority and the Cuſtom of the Cloth give him a Right to Contradiction; and if he loves State and *Pompam aulicam*, what Layman does not? If he hates to ſee a Brother peeping through Timber, or wrigling in a String, who can blame the Workings of Self-love? If the *German Princes* are under his Diſpleaſure for ſacrilegiouſly admitting their Pages to ſay Grace; ſo are all they who make bold to cut their own Corns, under the Frowns of that famous Artiſt *Don Saltero* of *Chelſea*.

To conclude with a grave Paragraph: I am afraid it too often happens, that this ſame *Houſhold Prieſt*, who is taken into a Family to ſanctify it, proves a Diſturber of its Repoſe, and a Foe to its Welfare. He is a Spy upon the Wealthy and the Great, for the ill Ends of his Order. If he has the Ear of his Patron, he can, by alarming his Conſcience, or ſtroaking his Vanity, influence him to turn the Patrimony of his Children into a Gift to the Altar; and ſo a Family of Innocents are ſtraitned, or ruined, to enlarge the Pride and

Income

Income of a worthleſs Vicar, or to rear up a graceleſs Mob, for the Intereſt and Support of Prieſtcraft and Slavery. So that the Publick it ſelf ſuffers in no ſmall Degree from the malignant Influence which deſigning *Chaplains* have in Great Houſes. How many Noble Families are by them inflamed with an unſocial Bitterneſs of Spirit againſt all thoſe, who inoffenſively think for themſelves; and are tainted with the vile Principles of Vaſſalage to any Authority, *Civil* or *Sacred*, which theſe their Spiritual Governors ſhall plead for?

P. S. This Paper being intended to expoſe the ridiculous Privileges claimed in Behalf of Chaplains, as if they were of Divine Inſtitution; and the ill Uſe they make of their Influence over weak Minds; nothing here ſaid is meant againſt any Gentleman's taking into his Family a pious and agreeable Clergyman, under the Title of a Chaplain; who, if he poſſeſſes an honeſt and beneficent Heart, with Affability and good Breeding, is, no doubt, an amiable Character. But as to thoſe little, ſour, unbred Bigots, whom I have frequently ſeen in that Station, I do not think they ought to be admitted into the Converſation of Gentlemen, or ſuffered to have any Concern either with their Children or Servants.

NUMBER XXI.

Wedneſday, June 8. 1720.

A Compariſon *between the* High-Church *and the* Quakers.

THE Clergy of our National Church are Spiritual Officers *appointed* by Order of the Civil Magiſtrate (like Church-Wardens, Overſeers of the Poor, Conſtables, and other Pariſh Officers) to act according to his *Law*, which is their Rule, and which has interpreted the Bible for them in the Thirty-Nine *Articles*, Homilies, Liturgy, Canons, Injunctions, and other Inſtitutions. The chief Deſign of their *Appointment* is to inſtruct Men in Religion and Morality, or to make Men *wiſer* and *better* than they would be without their Aſſiſtance. To that End they are *hir'd*, and paid a great Revenue, which, by the Means of Lands, Tythes, Rents, Salaries, Fees, and Per-

Perquiſites, is ſuppos'd to amount to Two Millions *per Annum*; wherein they greatly differ from the aforeſaid Pariſh-Officers, who perform many real Services to Society without any particular Reward, as is, in many Caſes, the certain Duty, which Men of the ſame Society owe to one another: But as making Men *wiſe* and *good* are the very beſt Things which can be done for them, both in Relation to their Condition in this World and the next: So every Man ought to think this Revenue *well beſtow'd*, if Men are made more *wiſe* and *good* in any Proportion to the Charge; and on the other ſide *ill beſtow'd*, if Men are not in the leaſt improv'd in Knowledge and Virtue; much more, if they are render'd *more ignorant* and *worſe* by the Teaching and Influence of their Guides.

We are juſtly concern'd how we part with our Money in other Caſes, how it is laid out and managed, and whether what we receive in Lieu of it be worth our Money, eſpecially when the Sum is conſiderable. It is therefore of great Importance to us to conſider the State of this Affair, wherein ſo much is expended, that in Caſe the Clergy do not anſwer the Ends of their Calling, and not deſerve their Revenues, we may take proper Meaſures to make them do ſo; for it is in the Power of us of the Laity, who almoſt wholly chuſe and conſtitute the Legiſlature, to make the Clergy uſeful, and it is either thro' our Ignorance, or Knavery, or Both, if we do not make them uſeful.

Now

Now it ſeems to me, that the Toleration or Liberty of Conſcience granted by Law in *England*, gives us an Opportunity of examining this Matter, beyond what can be done in *Popiſh* or other Countries, where no ſuch Toleration is allow'd. We have a numerous Sect, or People among us, diſtinguiſh'd by the Name of *Quakers*, who have no Spiritual Officers, with any Wages, Hire, or Salary, whoſe peculiar Buſineſs it is to Teach; but every Man among them does freely of himſelf, and *gratis*, communicate his Knowledge, both publickly and privately, according to his Ability, whenever he judges it proper ſo to do: And therefore we may eaſily make a Compariſon in the Caſe, between the Wiſdom and Virtue of the common People of the National Church, and the Wiſdom and Virtue of the *Quakers*, (who have no Quality or Gentry among them, but conſiſt of Tradeſmen, Artificers, Farmers, Servants, and Labourers) and thereby make a juſt Judgment, whether the Two Millions *per Annum* are *well* or *ill* beſtow'd.

1. No Man will deny, but the *Quakers* are born with the ſame natural Parts as the Churchmen. It will alſo be manifeſt, that they improve their natural Parts by the Knowledge of what the Clergy eſteem the moſt important and ſublime Points of Religion, under their general, diffus'd, *unhir'd* Miniſtry; equally at leaſt with the Members of the Church, under the Direction of their Clergy, *hir'd* for Wages; for by free Converſation with both

both Sorts, you will find that the *Quakers* underſtand as well the Nature and Attributes of God, the Doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, the Satisfaction, the Incarnation of God, and other ſuch Points, and expreſs themſelves as clearly about them as Churchmen; and I preſume this Matter will appear ſo clear as not to admit of the leaſt doubt. I do confeſs, the *Quakers* have ſome *Errors*, (for what Man is or can be free from Error?) But as to thoſe Errors, I think two Things may be offer'd in Excuſe of them.

Firſt, I obſerve in general with the moſt ingenious and Reverend Mr. NORRIS, (in his *Two Treatiſes of Divine Light*, 2d Tract, p. 32.) who ſays, *that he cannot think* Quakeriſm *inconſiderable, as the Principles of it are laid down and manag'd by Mr.* BARCLAY. *That great and general Contempt they lie under, does not hinder* him *from thinking the Sect of the* Quakers *to be far the moſt conſiderable of any that divide from the Church, in Caſe the* Quakeriſm *that is generally held be the ſame with that which Mr.* BARCLAY *has deliver'd to the World for ſuch; whom he takes to be ſo great a Man, that* he *profeſſes freely that he had rather engage againſt an Hundred* BELLARMINS, HARDINGS, *and* STAPLETONS, *than with One* BARCLAY.

Secondly, I obſerve, that the *Quakers* ſeem very excuſable in reſpect to ſeveral of the Errors wherewith they are charg'd; and that their Neighbours, if they would do as they deſire to be done unto, may juſtly pardon them.

them. For as to their Opinions about Tythes, and paying Wages to Clergy, (which are deem'd fundamental Errors, and judged by the Clergy in their Books againſt the *Quakers* to be a ſort of *Atheiſm*) they have it to ſay in their Excuſe, that *Tythes*, which were a Part of the ritual Law of the *Jews*, are as ſuch aboliſh'd under the Goſpel, which has repeal'd the whole ritual Law. It ſeems alſo ſtrange to them, that *Ambaſſadors*, (as the Clergy pretend to be) or *Negociators*, ſhould claim Money from thoſe to whom they are ſent; and it appears more ſtrange that the Clergy, who pretend to be Succeſſors in Ambaſſadorſhip to *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, ſhould claim Tythes or Money, and thereby ſuppoſe our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf and his Apoſtles to have begun that Claim: Therefore they alledge, that if the Clergy are only voluntary Ambaſſadors or Negociators, they ought to bear their own Charges; and if only *Miniſters* or Servants, they ſhould be paid their Wages by thoſe who *hire* them, and not claim an independent Maintenance; and herein they pretend to follow the Primitive Chriſtians, *who* (according to the Reverend and Learned Dr. REEVES, in his *Apologies*, &c. Vol. 1. p. 44.) *would not pay Taxes for the Maintenance of the Heathen Temples*: And indeed, there is no Colour to make Tythes due *Jure Divino*, that Point being fully determined on the Side of the *Quakers*, by that accompliſh'd Scholar and Divine, Dr. *Prideaux*,

deaux, in his *Original and Right of Tythes*; and beſides, it is a Matter of Conteſt among the Clergy, to which ſort of them an independent Maintenance does by Divine Right belong.

As to the *Quakers* Doctrines of Paſſive Obedience, or taking patiently all manner of Affronts and Injuries, and refuſing to bear Arms on any Occaſion; it is known, that herein they follow St. JUSTIN MARTYR, ORIGEN, TERTULLIAN, St. CYPRIAN, LACTANTIUS, St. BASIL, SALVIAN, and others the moſt Learned and Ancient of the Primitive Fathers.

And as to their Principle of *not Swearing at all*, they follow *the Fathers of the Five Firſt Centuries, who* (according to the moſt Learned Dr. WHITBY, in *Diſſert. de Script. Interp.* p. 164.) *all agreed, that Oaths of all Kinds were Unlawful to Chriſtians*; thoſe Fathers underſtanding our Saviour's Words, *Swear not at all*, univerſally; which, indeed, ſeem ſuited to the Notion, as they were the very Language, of the *Eſſenes*, a Sect of *Jews* in our Saviour's Time, who maintain'd all Oaths to be Unlawful.

It will be difficult to find one *Quaker* that cannot read, unleſs he has been educated and bred up in the Church, and became a Convert to *Quakeriſm*. Whereas, I will venture to affirm, that Half the Common People of the Church, eſpecially in the Country, cannot read a Word.

The

The *Quakers* are great Readers of the Bible; and it is their Principle to endeavour to *make the Beſt* of that Divine Book; which, tho' containing infinite Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge, yet, as it is a perfect Rule of Faith to the whole World, is a plain and moſt intelligible Book, and muſt naturally improve the *Quakers* more than it does thoſe Churchmen, who either cannot read, or do not read the Bible at all, or not ſo much as the *Quakers*; or that think they are *not to make the Beſt of their Bibles without any Reſtraint.* I dare to be ſo unfaſhionable as to aſſert, that the Bible may, and will, improve the Readers thereof; notwithſtanding Dr. SOUTH ſays of a Part of that Holy Book, that it *either finds Men mad or makes them ſo*; and that Dr. REEVES, in Derogation of its Divine Precepts, thinks fit to ſuppoſe, that *Quakers*, by reading the Bible, become *ſtark Bible-mad.* (*Preface to Apologies*, &c. *p.* 11.)

But there is one Point wherein the *Quakers* greatly exceed the Churchmen in Underſtanding, and whereof the Meaneſt among them is firmly perſwaded; and that is, that *Every Man is to judge for himſelf in Matters of Religion.* Whereas few Churchmen are clear, as Men, Chriſtians, and Proteſtants, ought to be, in this Matter; which is the Foundation of all good Senſe, Chriſtianity, and our glorious Reformation from the *Worſt Prieſtcraft*, POPERY. This Principle naturally produces Knowledge: For the Uſe of the Underſtanding

ing improves the Faculty; as delivering up the Understanding to Priests or Guides, sinks and debases it. And accordingly the *Quakers* reason and act very nicely in their Affairs, as a Politick Body, in Relation to Marriage, Orphans, Care of their Poor, *&c.* and Particulars among them understand Trade, and the Business of the World, and how to live in it, as well as any Men whatsoever.

2. As to the Comparison, which are the *Best* Men, *Quakers* or Churchmen; I suppose, it will not be deny'd, but that the *Quakers* are as good Men; as good in their Families; as good Neighbours; as Quiet, Temperate, Chaste, Sober, Free from Passion, Industrious; as clear from the gross Crimes which fill the Goals, and expose Men to the Pillory and Hanging; as Charitable in their Sentiments to those who differ from them; as great Enemies to Persecution; as true to Liberty and Property as any Churchmen; and, in fine, as good Subjects, and as Loyal to King GEORGE, (tho' Loyalty be the distinguishing Principle and Glory of our Church,) as any professed Follower of Dr. SACHEVEREL, LUKE MILBOURNE, or other swearing loyal Divine.

Since, therefore, it is undeniably evident, that the *Quakers* are at least as *wise* and as *good*, *without* any Charge to the Publick, as Churchmen are *with it*; I conceive it is incumbent on every One, who does not envy the Clergy their Preferments, to endeavour

to

to find out ſome other Way to make them as uſeful as poſſible to Mankind, and to put them upon ſuch an Eſtabliſhment as may enable them to deſerve all their Power and Riches; which ſhall be the Subject of ſome future Papers.

NUMBER XXII.

Wedneſday, June 15. 1720.

Prieſtcraft *corrupts every Thing and perverts the Uſe of Words.*

POETS tell us, that *Midas* changed every Thing he touch'd into Gold, and *Meduſa*'s Head every one who ſaw it into Stone; but Prieſtcraft is yet of a more miſchievous Nature, for That converts all who come within its Influence into Idiots or Lunaticks; and every Vertue or good Quality of the Mind into Nonſenſe or Roguery.

Every Creature and Plant aſſimilate the Food or Nouriſhment they receive into their own

own Subſtance: The Toad converts into Poyſon the ſame Juices, of which the Bee makes Honey: The ſame Breath blown into different Inſtruments, makes good or harſh Muſick; it is no wonder therefore if that which is all Corruption it ſelf, ſhould corrupt and ſpoil every Thing elſe which touches or comes near it.

It has ſo mangled and perverted the Signification of Words, and the Nature of Things, that Language is rendered uſeleſs, or rather a Snare to Mankind: There is ſcarce a Sound or an Action, which has received the Stamp of a general Approbation, that has not loſt its Meaning; and is ſtript of all Honeſty to become Orthodox, and be made free of the *ſacred Society*, as the *Popiſh* Prieſts are pleaſed to call themſelves.

A becoming Zeal for the Glory of God, which ought to be a fervent Diſpoſition of Mind to promote Holineſs and Virtue amongſt Men, by Softneſs, Perſwaſion, and Example, is now nothing but Party Rage, an implacable and furious Hatred, and the Denunciation of Woe and mortal War againſt all, who do not believe juſt the ſame with us, and cut their Corns as we do: Moderation is become a Vice, and eſteemed to be Lukewarmneſs, and an Indifference to Religion and Goodneſs.

An obſtinate Bent of Mind, and a determinate Reſolution to adhere to Opinions, the Truth of which we have never examined,

never intend to examine, and for the moſt part are not able to underſtand if we did, is what is call'd Conſtancy in the Faith; and to burn our ſelves, or to fight with our beſt Friends till we can burn them, paſſes for Heroick and Chriſtian Courage.

We muſt ſhut out the Sun at Noon in a Summer's Day, to make uſe of Candle-Light; and give up all our Senſes, to ſubmit to frail Authority. We are to believe every Thing in exact Proportion as we cannot underſtand it, or as it appears abſurd; and allow that alone to be true Faith, which contradicts the firſt Principles of Science. Reaſon, which is the only Light God has given to Men, to diſtinguiſh Truth from Falſhood, Virtue from Vice, Religion from Impoſture, is decried; and the Uſe of it deemed impious and dangerous.

Perſecution of our Fellow-Creatures, Fellow-Subjects and Fellow-Chriſtians, for doing the beſt Action they are capable of doing, (which is worſhiping God in the Manner they think to be moſt acceptable to him) is called ſerving the Almighty, and promoting his Religion. The ruining and deſtroying our Neighbours, (whom we are commanded to love as our ſelves) and cutting their Throats, is having Pity upon their poor Souls; and the acting againſt all the Dictates of Nature, and Precepts of the Goſpel, is Chriſtianity, and doing the Will of our Saviour.

Enthuſiaſts, fanatical, melancholly, monkiſh, recluſe and ſequeſtred Perſons, are eſteemed *the Religious*; and are ſuppoſed to know the other World, in Proportion as they know little of this. Philoſophers, and Men of Wit or ſound Knowledge, are generally accuſed of Infidelity and Atheiſm: Nay, the cardinal Virtues themſelves cannot eſcape; but without the Belief of certain faſhionable Speculations, are accounted only *ſplendida Peccata*, and thoſe who poſſeſs them are treated with Ignominy; and indeed, none are thought fit for Heaven by Gentlemen of this Caſt, but ſuch as no Man of common Senſe would care to keep Company with upon Earth.

Celibacy is eſteemed a Virtue in ſome Churches, and not diſcouraged in others; and the diſobeying the great Dictates of Nature, and the poſitive Command of God, *to encreaſe and multiply*, is miſcalled Chaſtity; and the waſting our Time in running up and down from Church to Chappel, from Chappel to Church, to hear *Maſſes*, and idle Harangues, and being perfectly uſeleſs to Society, and good for no one Thing in the World, is called by the *Popiſh* Prieſts *Devotion* and *Godlineſs*; as if the Almighty could be any way ſerved but by doing good to his Creatures.

Poorneſs and Dejection of Mind, is called Meekneſs of Spirit; and a Readineſs to ſubmit to Injuries and Impoſitions is Chriſtian Humility; ſtifling our Senſes, is Submiſſion

and Deference to Authority; and our beſt Searches, and moſt ſincere Enquiries after Truth, are called the Deſires of Novelty and curious and forbidden Studies: The doubting of any Thing, which our Guides think it their Intereſt to tell us, or ſhewing the Weakneſs of their Arguments, is Scepticiſm, and renouncing the Faith; and a hearty Concern for the Honour of Almighty God, and the Good of Men, is often interpreted to be downright Atheiſm; and to communicate with our Chriſtian Brethren, when we can do it with a good Conſcience, is Hypocriſy; unleſs we do it too when we think it ſinful.

An Attempt to oblige the Clergy to keep the Laws they have ſworn to, and the Articles they have ſubſcribed, is to oppoſe received Opinions, and *quieta movere*. An Endeavour to preſerve our Legal Conſtitution, is Sedition, Faction, and being *given to change*; and a generous Love for all Mankind, and the Liberty of our Country, with a noble Reſolution to venture Life, and all which is valuable here below for that glorious Cauſe, is Rebellion, and worſe than the Sin of Witchcraft.

Waſting, macerating, and torturing our Bodies by Faſting and Penances, is ſanctifying our Souls; and to reject and throw back the Benevolence and bountiful Gifts of indulgent Providence, is to ſhew and pay our grateful Acknowledgments to his Goodneſs; as if he gave us any Thing, not to uſe and

enjoy

enjoy it; but we were to accept theſe Bleſſings only in Truſt for the Clergy, and ſo live poorly our ſelves, that they may riot in Luxury, Profuſeneſs and Pride: which they have ſeldom fail'd to do, when they have had the Means of doing it; carnal Things being obſerv'd beſt to ſuit with ſpiritual Minds.

Playing Monkey Tricks at Church, paſſes amongſt the Papiſts for the Worſhip of God; and they go to ghoſtly Dancing Maſters, to know how to accoſt him faſhionably: The failing in a Ceremony; the Omiſſion of a Bow; the not filing to the Right or Left readily, or not adjuſting their Motions to the Tune and Time of the Organs; are all dangerous Errors, and ſavour much of Hereſy; and the *worſhipping God in Spirit and in Truth* only, is Diſobedience to the Church, and little better, if not worſe, than Atheiſm: The decking up, and dreſſing of Churches, and giving the Deity fine Cloaths, is Decency, and doing him Honour.

Conſecration, which is the Appointment or Appropriation of Places, Perſons, or inanimate Things, to be uſed only in the immediate Service of God, (and which may be ſo applied indifferently with any Ceremony, or with none at all) is turn'd by the *Romiſh* Prieſts into a ſort of Incantation or ſpiritual Jugling: By virtue of a little Holy Water, looking towards the *Eaſt*, mumbling over a few cunning Words, certain Motions of the Hand and Head, and by the help of ſome

Powder le Pimp, the ſaid Places, Perſons and Things become ſacred, and the Holineſs is transferred from the Minds of the Communicants to the Ground, the Wainſcoat, and the Carcaſs and Cloaths of the Prieſt; and ſo the Devotion due to Almighty God, is chang'd into a ſenſeleſs Idolatry to as ſenſeleſs Men and Idols.

Prayers are turn'd by them into Curſes, and Sermons into Invectives and Libels: Benevolence and good Will towards Men, and even Charity it ſelf, which is comprehenſive of all the Vertues, and without which Faith and Hope ſignify nothing, and which is not confin'd to Perſons, Nations, or Languages, to Sects or Opinions, but ought to be as free as the Elements, and diffuſive as the animal Creation, is chang'd into Faction, Partiality, and often Profuſeneſs, to ſupport a Party, and a Combination againſt all Mankind, who do not think and act as we do.

But no Parts of Speech have had ſo ill Fortune, as Scripture Language, and even amongſt ſome Proteſtants: Appellatives, and the Names of Complex Ideas, are often left untranſlated, that they may paſs for real Beings, and ſignify whatever the Prieſts have Occaſion for; and ſometimes, where they have been tranſlated, falſe or unfair Meanings have been aſſigned to them, and they have been made to convey a quite different Senſe from what they import in Scripture: The Word *Eccleſia* or Aſſembly is tranſlated *Church*,

which

which *there* always signifies the *Christian People*, and in our Articles, is defined to be the *Congregation of the Faithful*, but is now generally us'd only for the Clergy; and the Word *Episcopos* (which in *English* is *Overseer*) is english'd *Bishop*; so that Women, and the ignorant Crowd, are fully satisfy'd that they have found in Scripture, a *Lord of Parliament*, and a *Diocesan Prelate*, with a Mitre upon his Head, and a Crosier in his Hand; and whenever they hear or read the Word *Presbyter*, they fancy they see a Parson beating his Cushion in a Pulpit, and believe him to be *Jure Divino*: Instances of this kind are endless.

Even Literature it self is perverted, and instead of being made to improve Mens natural Faculties, is used to extinguish or stifle the first Principles of Knowledge. Seminaries have been erected and endow'd to teach Men backward: The Youth at a very great Expence, learn to be Blockheads, and accomplish'd Dunces; and spend the first and most improvable Part of their Manhood to be finished in Folly. The Discovery of Printing, which brought about the Reformation, is used to destroy it; and, like the *Scotchman*'s Monkey, is made to bite every one but him who has the sole Custody of the Machine.

Of all or most of these Heads, I shall treat separately, in order to undeceive Mankind, and to manumit them from the Frauds and

Tyranny of *Popiſh* and popiſhly affected Clergymen; by ſhewing, that they *now do*, and *ever did*, make Uſe of all their Influence over the ſtupid and unhappy Laity, and of all the Power and Riches they have been ever truſted with, to drive Religion and Virtue from the Face of the Earth, and therefore have always endeavoured to turn the worſt Things into the beſt, and the beſt into the worſt.

One Drop of Prieſtcraft is enough to contaminate the Ocean.

NUMBER XXIII.

Wedneſday, June 22. 1720.

Of ZEAL.

I Do not know any Word, in any Language, which, next to the Word *Church*, has ſo much Wickedneſs and Roguery, to anſwer for, as the Word *Zeal*. It is indeed an important

portant and dreadful Monoſyllable, which, when uſed with proper Geſtures and Emphaſis, can turn a Cut-Throat into a Saint, and a Mad-man into a Martyr. It can commit Bloodſhed and Butchery, with innocent Hands; deſtroy Life and Property, with a good Conſcience; and diſpeople Nations with Applauſe.

True Zeal is a ſincere and warm Concern for the Glory of God, and the Spiritual Welfare of Mankind. This Definition ſeems to me to take in every Idea which ought to be annexed to the Word *Zeal*; and ſhews it to be a Vertue full of Affection, Meekneſs, Humanity and Benevolence, and void of all Choller, Bitterneſs, Ill-will, and Severity. This is its Character; and whatever contradicts it, is not *Zeal*, but *Rage*.

Eſpecial Care ought therefore to be taken, effectually to diſtinguiſh true Zeal from falſe, and the Thing from the Pretence of it. For, if it is not well grounded, it falls under the Apoſtle's Cenſure, of *a Zeal*, which is *not according to Knowledge*. Of the latter Sort, is that with which crafty Men infatuate the credulous Multitude, who take their Religion upon Truſt, and their Faith and Zeal at ſecond Hand. Their Godlineſs conſiſts in Prejudices and a Set of Names. They hate Diſſenters, becauſe they do not come to Church, and becauſe they are ſtrict Obſervers of the Lord's-Day, and ſeek God without Book: And they are *zealous* for the Church; but if

you

you ask them what they mean by it, you will find it to be either the Organs, the Ring of Bells, or the Parſon. They have a zealous Antipathy to a black Cloak, which is a certain Sign of a wrong Religion; and they have a doating Fondneſs for a black Gown, which is an infallible Mark of the true Church: They therefore abhor and inſult the former, and honour and bow down to the latter. Which Temper and Behaviour in them are wonderful Demonſtrations of the Spirit of the Goſpel; and entitle them to the higheſt Favour and Approbation of their Spiritual Governours. At the Time when Dr. *Sacheverel* was ſuffering the Law for Sedition, I asked one of his Mob, who was ſtragling at ſome Diſtance from the reſt, in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields* (as they were proceeding to demoliſh *Daniel Burgeſs*'s Meeting-Houſe) what provok'd him to ſo much Outrage againſt *Daniel*, and his Congregation? He anſwer'd, *Becauſe they had murther'd King* Charles *the Firſt.* I then asked him, What he knew concerning King *Charles the Firſt?* Why, quoth he, *He was One of the Twelve Apoſtles; and Dr.* Sacheverel *is the beſt Friend he has in the World.* Here he ſwore a great Oath, and left me to pity the Ignorance and Phrenzy of the enchanted Crowd.

Ignorance is the Mother of this ſort of *Zeal*, and Craft its Father: And as its Pedigree is vile, ſo is its Behaviour brutal and abominable; It is the Tool of Knavery and Deſign,

Design, and operates by Folly, Wickedness and Force: It is a Mastiff uncoupled, and halloo'd at Conscience, Sobriety, and Peace; and set on to devour every good Quality, it self possessing none: It is rouzed by Lies, and animated by Liquor: It combates Truth with Curses, and Moderation with Blows. Its Courage is Madness, and it is bold thro' Blindness. It has never any Mercy upon others, and seldom upon it self. It takes the Word of its *Driver*; and mistakes Mischief for Merit, and his Word for God's. It is the most miserable of all Slaves; it is blind, and it is distracted; and its only Freedom is to act Outrages, and shed Blood. It is neither blessed with Enjoyment nor Rest. It boils with Anger; it burns with Envy; it is tortured with Hatred; it is worried by all the worst Passions. It is incapable of Happiness; and either deaf to Instruction, or undone by it; for the Moment it grows wiser, it dies.

How often do Ambition and Design work their own impious Ends, under the snug Disguise of sanctify'd *Zeal!* Men are never weary of being deluded with Sounds; and a pious Word, artfully prostituted, and devoutly pronounced, will at any Time lure them into the grossest Impostures, and push them on to commit the most inhuman Barbarities. Thus the Papists are first taught that the *Pope* is a *Vice-God*, and the Representative of *Jesus Christ*; and that his *Zeal* for his own Re-

Revenues and Dominions, is *Zeal* for *Chriſt* and his Church; and then it is an eaſy Matter to perſwade theſe poor Slaves and Bubbles, to adopt ſuch a Portion of the ſame *Zeal*, as will prompt them to poiſon, and murder, and plunder, and burn all thoſe unhappy Schiſmaticks, who continue ſo, rather than abandon their Senſes, their Humanity, their Charity, and the Fear of God; all which are deſtructive of the Character of a *Zealot*. And thus both Papiſts and Proteſtants, being perſwaded by their Prieſts, that all who, either thro' Reaſon, or Grace, think differently from the ſaid Prieſts, are in a State of Damnation; become further perſwaded, that becauſe they are to be damned, therefore they are to be undone; and ſo anticipate the Labour of the Devils, and add Miſery to the miſerable. By this Means, as *Satan* is the Almighty's Executioner, they make themſelves *Satan*'s; and ſuch *Zeal* is at once the Inſtrument and Qualification of a *Dæmon*.

When I ſee a grave Doctor proudly urging upon his Hearers the *Divine Right* of *Epiſcopacy*, which is juſt of as much Importance to Mankind as the Divine Right of *Geography*; I ſee preſently into the Heart of the Man, and would lay any Wager that he has a burning Zeal to ſucceed St. *Peter*, in the Divine Revenue and Lordſhip of ſome Human Dioceſe; or elſe courts ſome Biſhop with great *Zeal* for his Lordſhip's Neice, or for a fat Benefice. And I cannot but own, that

that a Chriſtian *Zeal* for a Thouſand Pound a Year, or even for Two Hundred Pound a Year, or even for a rich Wife, gifted with a good Apoſtolick Fortune, is a very commendable and very prevailing ſort of *Zeal*; but I cannot ſee that it equally affects the whole Congregation. Pray of what Moment is it to a harmleſs, well-meaning Flock of Sheep, whether their Shepherd is called *Paſtor* or *Overſeer*? Or, whether he has Twenty Pound a Year Wages, or Twenty times as much? Or, whether he is hir'd by the whole Village, or only by the Chief Man of the Village? Or, whether he wears a plain *Hat*, or a high *Crown'd Cap*? Or, whether he wears *Linnen* or *Woollen*? But it is of great Moment to them, whether he feeds them or ſtarves them; or whether he defends or plunders them; or whether he utterly neglects them himſelf, or only leaves them to the Care and Command of his Dog; or whether he ſeeks their Safety and Happineſs, or only their Fleſh and their Fleeces.

But further; the Tempers of Men being either naturally warm, or quickly made ſo, it is eaſy to miſtake a hot Head for a devout Heart, and an angry Heart for a devout Zeal. But, alas, how different is the meek Spirit of the Goſpel, from that Fury which is rais'd by ſtrong Beer, or paſſionate Sermons! How little do Men conſider, that the ſame Arteries do often beat with equal Vigour for a Punk as for the Church, and occaſion

broken Heads for the one as ſoon as for the other!

True Chriſtian Divine *Zeal* is inſpired by God Almighty, and comes attended with every other Chriſtian Vertue, and ſubdues every unruly Paſſion. It is inſeparable from Charity, the higheſt *Chriſtian Grace*, and the chief Characteriſtick of a Chriſtian; that Charity, *which wiſheth all Things, hopeth all Things*; which forgives all Men, but hurts none. It neither burns nor impriſons Mens Bodies, nor plunders their Goods, nor rails at their Perſons, nor ſtirs up Miſchief againſt them, nor marks them out for Damnation. It is not raiſed by cruel Language, nor encreas'd by Bottles of Brandy; it is modeſt, it is merciful, it is temperate, it is diſcerning.

On the other Hand, there is not in the World a more cruel, debauch'd, or more ignorant Paſſion, than falſe *Zeal*: It is void of Pity, of Grace, of Knowledge, and of Charity; it is outragious; it delights in Blood; it commits Maſſacres, and murthers *Innocents*; it diſpeoples Nations: Nothing can reſtrain it, neither Kindred nor good Qualities, nor Pity nor Tears: It uſurps the Name of Religion, and deſtroys all Religion; it commits Abomination in a Style of Devotion, and talks Blaſphemy in the Name of the Lord. It proſtitutes God's Authority to deſtroy God's Works; and, in the Name of *Chriſt*, damns and deſtroys thoſe whom Chriſt died to ſave.

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If People would but look a little into their own Hearts and Conſtitutions, they would too often find that their *Zeal* is only Anger, and that this hot Devotion reſides altogether in the Blood. I have long obſerved that your Cholerick Fellows are your moſt zealous Fellows, and are always the warmeſt Churchmen; and that, amongſt the Ladies, the moſt amorous are ever the greateſt Bigots. He who is peeviſh at his Table, will be peeviſh in his Pulpit; and as highly offended at an ill Dinner, as at a Conventicle. I once caught a great fat Doctor at St. *Paul*'s, curſing and ſtorming againſt *Presbyterians*, whom he conſigned in a Body over to Satan, with great Zeal, and no Remorſe. Says I to my ſelf, *This reverend ill-tongu'd Parſon will certainly quarrel, and kick, over his Claret as well as over his Cuſhion:* In order to try, I got into his Company at the *Baptiſt's-Head*, and by the Humility of my Behaviour, and the Dignity of the *Hermitage*, I ſat at tolerable Eaſe with the Doctor, till the middle of the third Bottle; and then he ſwore at the Drawer for not anſwering before he was call'd; and, before it was out, he drank Confuſion to *Fanaticks*, and a Health to *Sorrel*. The Doctor then ſhew'd a violent Appetite for Quarrelling; but meeting no Body in the ſame Humour, he only eaſed himſelf in Oaths; till an honeſt Citizen drank to him the Glorious Memory of King *William*; which the Doctor pledged, by throwing a wild

wild Duck, juſt hot from the Spit, full in the Citizen's Face, and got up at the ſame Time to fall upon him with his Hands; but as ſoon as he got up he fell, and we left him upon the Floor, to the Care of the Drawers.

How long are Mankind to be deluded with Sounds; and how long will Uncharitableneſs and Outrage, which are Enemies to the Nature of Chriſtianity, paſs for *Zeal* for Religion! Are Men to be curs'd, or puniſh'd, or deſtroy'd, out of *Zeal* for the Goſpel, by which all Severity is forbid? Where are we commanded to quarrel for the Peace of the Church? or to run mad for the Reaſonableneſs of Liturgies? or to fight for the *Divine Original* of *Human Forms*? or to deliver Men to the Devil, for the ſaving of their Souls?

How unlike is our Modern *Zeal* to that of the Apoſtles, and how unworthy to be call'd by that Name! They liv'd under Hardſhips and Stripes, and ventur'd their Lives to convert Unbelievers: Our preſent Zealots live at Eaſe and in Plenty; and their *Zeal* is devoutly employ'd about Tythes, Honours, Garments, and Forms. They do not pretend to venture their Livings and their Lives to convert either *Pagan*, or *Papiſt*, or *Mahometan*. The *Idolatry* and *Infidelity* under which the miſerable World lies, do not ſeem to interrupt their Quiet and their Enjoyments. But if a Dozen harmleſs Chriſtians preſume

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to worſhip God in a Barn; or to pray to God without Book; or to commemorate *Chriſt*'s Death with Praiſes and Prayers, ſuch as a devout Heart dictates; or to refuſe complying with a Rote of Words, which they judge neither edifying nor warrantable; or to follow their Conſciences, which alone can juſtify them in the Sight of God; and not the Authority of Men, which cannot juſtify them in the Sight of God: they are allarm'd, and their Church totters if Conſcience is protected.

If this be the Spirit of Chriſtianity, I muſt own my ſelf to have been hitherto a Stranger to Chriſtianity; and yet theſe Men go on to tell us, that they are the only true Church, tho' they poſſeſs not one Grain of that Charity which diſtinguiſhes a Chriſtian from a Reprobate, as much as a Rational Soul does a Man from a Monkey; and to damn all other Churches, that is, the whole World, without taking one Step towards bringing them into a State of Salvation.

NUMBER XXIV.

Wedneſday, June 29. 1720.

Of PERSECUTION.

THERE are but two Ways of propagating Religion, namely, Miracles and Exhortation. The one depends upon divine Power, and the other upon the Strength of Reaſon. Where the Finger of God appears, all further Teſtimony is needleſs; and where the Truth is obvious to Reaſon, Miracles are needleſs. God never wills us to believe that which is above our Reaſon, but he at the ſame Time commands our Faith by Miracles. He does not leave neceſſary Things doubtful; and for this Reaſon alone it is, that Men are ſaid to be *left without Excuſe*.

Every Point of Belief therefore muſt be ſupported either by Reaſon or Miracle, or elſe it is no Point of Belief at all. Both the *Jewiſh* and the Chriſtian Law were delivered and enforced

forced with manifeſt Signs and Demonſtrations of God's extraordinary Preſence and Power. And it has been very juſtly boaſted of the Chriſtian Religion in particular, that it ſpread and proſpered by Miracles, Perſuaſion, and Clemency, in Oppoſition to Violence and Cruelty.

But when Chriſtianity became tainted and defaced by Prieſtcraft, it grew neceſſary to have many Points believed, which contradicted both Revelation and common Senſe: Therefore its *Foſter Fathers*, who to the Worſhip of God added the Worſhip of themſelves, had no other Way to prove their Syſtem but by Wrath and Vengeance. Reaſon was againſt them, and Miracles not for them: So their whole Dominion ſtood upon Falſhood, guarded by Force. This Force, when it is exerciſed upon a religious Account, is called *Perſecution*; which is what I am now to conſider and expoſe.

To puniſh Men for Opinions that are even plainly Falſe and Abſurd, is barbarous and unreaſonable. We poſſeſs different Minds as we do different Bodies; and the ſame Propoſition carries not the ſame Evidence to every Man alike, no more than the ſame Object appears equally clear to every Eye. A cholerick Temper, when it is not corrected with Reaſon, and ſeaſoned with Humanity, is naturally zealous. A phlegmatick Temper, on the other ſide, as it is naturally ſlow, ſo is it lukewarm and indifferent. Is there any

Merit in having a warm Complexion, or any Sin in being dull?

But further; to puniſh a Man for not ſeeing the Truth, or for not embracing it, is in the firſt Place, to make him miſerable, becauſe he is already ſo; and in the ſecond Place, to pluck Vengeance out of God's Hands, to whom alone it belongs, if we will take his own Word for it. If this Severity is pretended to be for his Good; I would ask, Is manifeſt Cruelty any Token of Kindneſs, or was it ever taken for ſuch? Does it not always encreaſe the Evil which it is employed to cure? Is Deſtruction the Means to Happineſs? Abſurd and terrible!

But what, if, after all, the Perſon perſecuted ſhould be found an Adherent to Truth and Honeſty, and *his* Enemies ſhould prove *their* Enemies? Would not this be adding Cruelty to Falſhood, and heaping up Guilt with both Hands? This indeed is often the Caſe. And where it is not altogether ſo, the Perſecutors are ſtill inexcuſable. He who, in the Search of Truth, does all he can, does as much as he ought. God requires no more; and what Man dares do it, who fears him? When *he* acquits, who is it that condemns?

Beſides, he that ſuffers, or at leaſt dies, for Religion, gives a Teſtimony by ſo doing, that his Conſcience is dearer to him than Eaſe or Intereſt: Whereas the Patrons of Perſecution have manifeſtly perſonal Motives and ſelf Ends in it. It gratifies their Pride, awes

awes Mankind, and brings them Obedience and Gain.

Our bleſſed Saviour, who had no View but the Redemption of the World, never uſed his Omnipotence, or the leaſt Force, to ſubdue his Enemies, though he knew their Hearts to be malicious and implacable. He neither delivered them to Death nor the Devil, even for the helliſh Deſigns to kill him; much leſs for Points of Error or Speculation. He reaſoned with all Men, but puniſhed none. He uſed Arguments, he worked Wonders; but Severities he neither practiſed, nor recommended. His was a different Spirit. He rebuked his Apoſtles with Sharpneſs, when being yet full of the Spirit of this World, and void of the Spirit of God, they were for bringing down Fire from Heaven upon the *Heretical Samaritans.* The merciful Jeſus would not hurt theſe half Heathens, though they rejected him in Perſon; for he *came not to deſtroy Mens Lives, but to ſave them*: And they who take another Method, give the Lye to the Lord of Life, and diſown him for their Head.

His Apoſtles, as ſoon as they had received the Holy Ghoſt, grew wiſer and more merciful. They ſhewed by Miracles, that they were endowed with the Divine Power; but they never uſed either to compel or to burn, though they were beſet with falſe Teachers, and oppoſed by Gain-ſayers. They were ſo far from giving ill Uſage, that they never re-

turned it. The Exercise of *Wholsome Severities* was no part of their Doctrine. Prayers and Perswasions were their only Arms, and such as became the *Gospel of Peace*.

This was the mild and heavenly Behaviour of Christ and his Apostles, towards those who did not believe, or believed wrong; and it was followed by all their Successors who aimed at the Good of Souls. But those who used the Sacred Function as a Stirrup to Power and Gain, made a new Gospel of their own Decisions, and forced it upon the World, partly by *Fighting*, and partly by *Cursing*. The Apostles taught Christ, and their Successors taught Themselves. It was not enough to believe the Doctrine of Christianity, but you must believe it in Words of their *inventing*. To dispute their Decrees, though they contradicted common Sense and the Spirit of God, was Heresy; and Heresy was Damnation. And when, in Consequence of this, they had allotted a pious Christian to eternal Flames, for his Infidelity in *them*, they dispatched him thither with all speed; because he was to be damned in the *other* World, therefore he was to be hanged or burned in *this*. A terrible Gradation of Cruelty! to be cursed, burned, and damned! But it was something natural; it began from persecuting Priests, and ended in Hell, and the Devil was the *last* and *highest* Executioner.

Thus they became *Prelates* of both Worlds, and Proprietors of the Punishments of both.

Even

Even where the Civil Sword was not at their Command, their Vengeance was as ſucceſsfully, and in my Opinion more terribly executed without it, by the temporal Effect of their Excommunication. For the Perſon under it was looked upon as a Dæmon, and one in the Power of the Devil; and ſo driven out, like a wild Beaſt, from all the Comforts of Life, and human Society, to periſh in a Deſart, by Hunger, or the Elements, or Beaſts of Prey. And all this, perhaps, for denying a Word or a Phraſe, which was never known in Scripture, though impudently pretended to be fetch'd from thence.

Such dreadful Dominion had they uſurped over the Bodies and Souls of Men, and ſo implacably did they exerciſe it! And, to fill up the Meaſure of their Falſhood and Cruelty, they blaſphemouſly pretended to be ſerving God, when they were acting as if there was none.

Thoſe who ſet up for Infallibility have found a good Excuſe, if it were true, for the inſupportable Tyranny, infinite Murthers, and wide Devaſtations, which their Religion has every where introduced. But thoſe, who exact a blind Obedience to Decrees, which they own to be human; and annex Penalties to Poſitions, which we know to be falſe, and they know to be diſputable; and, in fine, act and dictate as if they were infallible, without pretending to be ſo; are ſo utterly without all Excuſe, that I know no Lan-

guage which affords a Name proper for their Behaviour.

The *Mahometan* Impoſture was profeſſedly to be ſpread by the Sword. It had nothing elſe but that and Libertiniſm to recommend it. But to propagate the Chriſtian Religion by Terror or Arms, is to deny it. It owns no ſuch Spirit. It rendered it ſelf amiable, and gained Ground, by a Principle of Peace and Love. Theſe were the Means of Chriſt's inſtituting, for the Recommendation and Defence of his Goſpel; and they, who would chuſe contrary ones, charge him with Folly, and have Ends to ſerve very different from his. Ambition, Pride, and Revenge, may make good Uſe of Violence and Perſecution; but they are the Bane of Chriſtianity, which always ſinks when Perſecution riſes. The vileſt and moſt profligate Men are ever the greateſt Promoters of it; and the moſt virtuous are the greateſt Sufferers by it. Libertines ſtick at nothing; but they who have the Fear of God, cannot comply with all Things.

Perſecution is therefore *the War of Craft againſt Conſcience*, and of Impiety againſt Truth. Reaſon, Religion, and Liberty, are its great Foes; but Ignorance, Tyranny, and Atheiſm, its great Seconds and Support. We ought then conſtantly to oppoſe all Claims of Dominion in the Clergy; for they naturally end in Cruelty. I believe it will be hard to ſhew, that ever the Prieſthood, at any Time,

or in any Place, enjoyed the Power of Perſecution, without making uſe of it.

NUMBER XXV.

Wedneſday, July 6. 1720.

Of CONSECRATION.

HOLINESS is that Character of Purity, which originally and eſſentially appertains to God Almighty, (as a Being utterly incapable of Stain and Imperfection;) but is alſo aſcribed, in a reſtrained and relative Senſe, to every Act of Devotion, and every Perſon performing it. It is an active and rational Thing; and where it is attributed to Things inanimate or irrational, it is either merely in a figurative Senſe, or in no Senſe at all.

Thus, when the Elements in the Sacraments are ſaid to be Holy, it is meant only of the Uſes to which they are apply'd, and the Purpoſes for which they are taken; for, tho' they were conſecrated over and over again,

gain, yet, if they are never taken, or never devoutly taken, they have in themſelves no more Holineſs than a common Roll, or a Cup of cold Water.

And thus, when a People are ſaid to be a *Holy People*, it is meant of their ſincere Love of God, and Conformity to his Will, and of the Actions by them perform'd in Conſequence of theſe good Affections. But, if ſuch Actions, tho' ſeemingly devout, are ſuperſtitious, or hypocritical; there is no more Holineſs in them, than in the *Indians* worſhipping the Devil, or in a Boy's ſaying his Prayers to avoid Whipping.

And thus, when a Houſe, or a Piece of Ground is ſaid to be Holy, it is underſtood only of ſome Mark of Holineſs there ſhewn, either by the extraordinary Preſence of God, or by ſome Act or Acts of Worſhip perform-ed there to him. But when theſe Marks of Omnipotence, and theſe Acts of Devotion ceaſe, that Ground is no more than com-mon Ground, and that Houſe is a common Houſe.

And thus, laſtly, when the Prieſts are call'd *Holy unto the Lord*, it is meant only of their aſſiſting at the ſolemn Acts of Ado-ration which are paid to him. At other times, they are as other Men; as is evident from their Living after the Manner of other Men.

Holineſs, therefore, conſiſts only in a vir-tuous and pious Diſpoſition towards God,

and

and is only ſhewn by the Actions which it produces. But as Superſtition, eſpecially when govern'd by Craft, never fails to ſee, or to think it ſees, Effects and Operations, which neither Religion nor common Senſe can ſhew; hence Men have been generally perſwaded that Places, Buildings, Utenſils, and Garments, did actually poſſeſs a real Holineſs; that Stones and Brickbats are bleſſed; and that Timber, Surplices and Bells are exceeding godly Bodies.

To help on this wretched and ſenſeleſs Credulity, the *Pagan* and *Popiſh* Prieſts have gone ſo far as to compoſe Farces of *Legerdemain*, call'd by them *Offices* of *Conſecration*; the whole End of which was, they pretended, to beſtow Godlineſs upon dead Earth, and Things inanimate. Thus they deceived the People in the Name of the Lord, and gravely made Speeches (which they called Prayers) over Wood, Stones, and Iron; by Virtue of which, the ſaid Wood, Stones and Iron were obliged to become good Orthodox Lumber, and as ſanctify'd Bodies as the other Members of the Congregation.

If one was to demand of theſe reverend Worthies, *who required theſe Things at their Hands?* I doubt it would prove a hard Queſtion; and probably the impertinent Enquirer would be diſpatch'd for Satisfaction to *Satan*, or the Inquiſition—An effectual and orthodox Anſwer to ſuch buſy Unbelievers, and often practiſed with terrible Succeſs!

But

But as I live in a Nation where ſuch Superſtitions and Cruelties are, I bleſs God, at an End; I take Leave to be amazed at the Aſſurance of thoſe Popiſh Conſecrators, who thus impiouſly pretend to draw down an Attribute of the Almighty, and endow with it what Spot of Earth they pleaſe. Will theſe inſolent Deceivers ſay, that God Almighty cannot hear as well and as favourably, a Prayer put up from a Ship as from a Chappel? Or in what Part of Scripture are we told, that he will be rather worſhipped at St. *Peter's*, than upon the *Alps*; or at *Loretto*, or any other *conſecrated Place*, rather than a Booth, or a Barn; provided the Worſhip is perform'd with equal Piety? Or does e'er a Text in the New Teſtament inform us, that one Piece of Earth is holier than another; or that any Man or Society of Men can make it ſo?

If conſecrated Ground has no more Holineſs in it than other Ground, how is divine Worſhip more acceptable in it than in other Ground? And if it has ſome uncommon Sanctity in it; let thoſe concerned tell us what it is, how it is, and by what certain Signs we ſhall know it? And whether it keeps all the ſaid Holineſs to it ſelf, and amongſt its own inanimate Heap of Stones, Timber, and Nails; and then what are *We* the better for it? Or whether the religious Bricks and Mortar do in good Earneſt communicate Part of their Piety to the People? And, if ſo,

ſo, in what Manner do they perform this; and how does it appear firſt, and operate afterwards? But if all this is a Myſtery, let them ſhew us where it is revealed in Scripture, wherein all other Myſteries are revealed.

If by Conſecration any Change is made, the ſame muſt be either viſible, or only myſtical. If the Change is viſible, then it comes under the Teſt and Examination of our Senſes, and muſt be evident to all Men: But if the Change is purely myſtical, it muſt be revealed to all. So that we muſt either have the Evidence of Senſe, or the Evidence of God's Word and Authority, which is as good. But where neither of theſe Proofs appear, our Faith and Aſſent ought neither to be demanded; nor given, if demanded.

If Prayers are more prevailing with God, and divine Service more welcome to him, when they come from conſecrated Ground; then all Worſhip and Devotion ought to be performed only at Church; and Family-Religion ought either to be neglected, (as lame and inſufficient) or every private Houſe ſhould be conſecrated; and then every Houſe would be a Chappel, and every Chappel is a Church. I would be glad to know, why only one Houſe in a Pariſh ſhould be conſecrated, that is, made fit to pray in; and why not every Houſe, for the ſame Reaſon? For, nothing that helps Devotion ought to be omitted, ſuch Omiſſion being doubtleſs a great Sin.

But

But if it is allowed that People may pray to as good Purpoſe *out of* conſecrated Ground as *in it*; how are Prayers at Church better than in a Chamber, or the Fields? Or, why ſhould the Prayers of Five Hundred have more Need of conſecrated Ground, than the Prayers of One, Two, or Three? Or, if a Place becomes Holy by the Devotions perform'd in it, then every Place where Devotions are perform'd, is as Holy as another; and if ſo, pray what Uſe of a Form of Words and a particular Office for that Purpoſe?

Suppoſe a Church to be conſecrated, and yet never after uſed; is it, for all this, Holy? Or, ſuppoſe it has been uſed for all the Purpoſes of a Church, and yet was never formally conſecrated; is it, for all that, not Holy?

Either the Scripture is not a ſufficient Rule of Worſhip, or this Buſineſs of Conſecration in *Popiſh* and *Pagan* Countries, is a needleſs, empty, ſuperſtitious Foppery, an evident Trick of Prieſtcraft; as if the Prieſts could change the Nature of Things, and confer the Grace which they have not themſelves upon Stocks and Stones, that have not, nor can have, the leaſt moral Goodneſs or Pravity in them. A General of an Army may as modeſtly and rationally contend, that the Ground, on which his Pavillion ſtands, is valiant Ground; and that the Ticking, of which it is made, is courageous Ticking. And, according to the ſame Way of Reaſoning,

ing, there is prodigious Policy in the Boards that compoſe the Council-Table; the Carpet is a long-headed Carpet, and the Wainſcot and Chairs underſtand wonderfully well the Intereſt of *Chriſtendom*.

If Devotion gives a Tincture of it ſelf to Wood and Walls; the Pravity of ill Actions muſt, by the ſame Rule, diffuſe it ſelf, and taint all the Houſe or Fields where ſuch ill Actions are committed. A Jobb of Lewdneſs muſt needs debauch the Curtains greatly, and the Bed-cloaths muſt partake of the Iniquity; and were juſtly puniſhed by Fire in *Herefordſhire* for that Reaſon; at which Execution, I am told, a certain devout Perſon now Living was a very zealous and uſeful Aſſiſtant. Every Counter and Shop-board in the City muſt, for the like Reaſon, be guilty of unpardonable Tricking and Lying; and for Falſhood and Diſſimulation, Heaven have Mercy upon ſome great Buildings at the Court End of the Town!

I would here be glad to know the preciſe Extent of the Influence which Holineſs and Vice have upon the inanimate Creation: Is a thick Church-wall as quickly and fully impregnated with them as a thin One? And do they never extend an Inch beyond the Church and Church-yard? Or, is the Church equally Holy, whether much Devotion, or little, is perform'd in it? Or have the Popiſh Prieſts ſet Bounds to the Godlineſs of the Ground, and the Building; and ſaid——

Thus

Thus far, or thus deep, O Ground! ſhall thy Holineſs extend, and no farther.

If Conſecration ſignifies any Thing more than a Declaration, that ſuch a Place is ſet aſide for the Worſhip of God, I wiſh it could be explained and proved; and the rather, becauſe Things of the moſt ſimple and obvious Nature have, by the Guile or Superſtition of deſigning Church-men, been render'd to the credulous gaping Multitude, myſterious and tremendous; the natural Enthuſiaſm which reſides in the Mind of Man, having always made him the Prey and Property of Deluſion and Deluders.

Happy, thrice happy are we, who live in a Country where all this *Pagan* Idolatry and theſe Monkiſh Fooleries receive no Countenance from our Laws; but, on the contrary, are forbid and puniſhable by them. The Laity at the Reformation had ſeen what Uſe the Prieſts made of this dark Jugling, and of theſe *Hocus Pocus* Tricks; and, therefore, would not ſuffer them to be play'd over again, to deceive ſuperſtitious and enchanted Bigots, by making them pay great Prices to be buried in conſecrated Ground; which roſe like the Value of Jewels, as they approached nearer to the Bodies of Saints, or to the Altar, where it ſeems the Devil could not come at them; with many other advantageous Frauds, which I ſhall hereafter expoſe to the World, when I treat again upon this prolifick Subject.

NUMBER XXVI.

Wedneſday, July 13. 1720.

Of FAITH *and* MORALITY.

REligion and Vertue conſiſt in doing good Actions, or in a Diſpoſition to do them. Theſe being in our Power, as we perform or neglect them, we merit Praiſe or Blame. But in Matters of Speculation, or Doubt, or ſuch as are not neceſſarily attended with ſome Conſequences, it is of no Moment on which Side of the Queſtion we ſtand. Where there is no Certainty, or Significancy, there can be no Duty. Faith without Works, in Scripture, has but a very indifferent Character: It is ſaid to be dead; and we all know that what is dead, is uſeleſs.

If you would know any Man's Affections towards God, conſult his Behaviour towards Men. Though his Profeſſions be ever ſo voluminous; though his Zeal be ever ſo noiſy;

though he believes by the Lump, and ſwallows Creeds by Dozens; yet if he is immoral, he is worſe than an Infidel. What is the Uſe of Belief, but to govern our Practice, and beget good Deeds? We all ſee the Neceſſity of living well; but to believe well, and do no more, is the ſame Thing, with Regard to others, as not to believe at all; and, with Regard to our ſelves, worſe.

A worthy Life infers worthy Principles; but a baſe Behaviour contradicts and diſhonours an honeſt Profeſſion. Will any one tell me, that a virtuous Heathen is not a better Man, and more in the Favour of God, than a profligate Chriſtian? A *Pagan*, who violates not the Laws of Truth and Peace, is, in my Eyes, an infinitely more religious Perſon, than a turbulent and forſworn Chriſtian Prieſt, though he wears a Mitre.

Socrates, *Plato*, *Cato* and *Brutus*, were excellent Perſons, though they were only govern'd by the ſimple Dictates of human Reaſon, and were utter Strangers to Creeds and Fathers, and our preſent orthodox Notions eſtabliſhed by Law. Who, that has any Care for his Soul, any Honour for his God, or any Love for Mankind, would not rather chuſe to be animated by the rational and beneficent Sentiments of theſe *righteous Gentiles*, than be poſſeſs'd with the fierce and inhuman Spirit of *Father Laud*, *Friar Francis*, or *Doctor Bungy*, though they were all ſound Believers?

Believers? I would have mentioned *Ariſtotle* here with the other *Ancients*; but I find, that though he was very Orthodox, and a great Enemy to Dr. *Clark*'s *Arian* Principles, * yet this true Believer was a very wicked Liver. However, as a true Friend, to the Church *he died the Death of the Righteous*, and 'tis ſaid, enjoys *everlaſting Life*. †

Beſides, ſaying is not proving. If we would be thought Chriſtians, we ought to ſhew our ſelves Chriſtians. Living well, is the beſt and only Evidence we can give that we believe well. If a Man profeſſes his Faith in Jeſus Chriſt with one Breath, and ſwears falſly by his Name with another, why ſhould I give Credit to one who ſo effectually contradicts himſelf? We do not credit the Propoſitions of Mathematicians, till they have gained our Aſſent by Demonſtration: And why ſhould we truſt any Man's Profeſſions of Faith and Morality, before he has, by Works of Faith and Morality, proved them ſincere? If we hear a Man full of the Praiſes of Loyalty, and yet ſee him every Day rebelling, would we not take him for a Madman or a

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* Emanuel de Moura, *and ſome other orthodox Writers ſay, that* Ariſtotle *was a ſteady Believer of the Trinity.*

† *This is the Opinion of* Sepulveda, *a learned Man in the 16th Century.*

The whole Article of Ariſtotle, *in Mr.* Bayle's *Dictionary, is well worth reading.*

Deceiver? A good Life is beneficial both to our ſelves and others; but a good Belief without it, is neither.

But beſides, this ſame Belief is perhaps neceſſary; and if ſo, what is unavoidable, is not vertuous. Where is the Praiſe or Merit of feeling the Heat of the Sun, or the Severity of the Winter? Or of hearing Sounds, when our Ears are open? To believe in Chriſt was and is inevitable: His Miracles command Aſſent. But to do his Will, is a Trial of our Piety and Virtue. And for our Saviour himſelf, would his Law have been ever received, or his Doctrine believed, had he contradicted Both by his Example? Or could the Apoſtles, without leading the Lives of Chriſtians, have gained Converts to Chriſtianity?

I have placed Faith and Practice in this Light, to ſhew how little valuable the Pretence of believing well makes Men, unleſs they alſo live well. I would therefore bring our High Clergy to be tried by this Teſt. If they are more zealous for Orthodoxy than Piety; if they abhor a virtuous Man, who prefers the Dictates of his own Conſcience, before thoſe of their Ambition and Authority; and openly court and honour any Perſon, who is obſervant of the Prieſthood, tho' he lives at manifeſt Defiance with Heaven; if they treat Unbelievers and Debauchees as pure Churchmen, and devout Chriſtians as Schiſmaticks, Hereticks, and the Lord knows what,

what, their Faith is ſelfiſh and vain, and ſuch Religion is falſe and abſurd.

Conformity is the Word! it is the Mother of all Virtues, and the Sanctifier of all Crimes. It is, in fine, All in All. And yet, ſo weak and blind am I, that I take this ſame applauded Conformity to be, in ſome Caſes, a very great Sin. If a Man, for Inſtance, in the Worſhip of God, follows the Authority of any Church whatſoever, and diſſents at the ſame Time from the Suggeſtions and Perſwaſions of his own Conſcience; it is certain, that he does not worſhip God at all, but mocks him, adores Men, and condemns himſelf. If, on the other Hand, he thinks his Soul in Danger, or in no Way of being edify'd in any Church, tho' ever ſo Orthodox; he ought to deſert it, and join with that which appears to him better. If I ſhould thwart or diſturb my Conſcience, by bowing faſhionably to the Altar; I would ask the Clergy, whether ought the Altar or my Conſcience to be firſt or moſt regarded? He who believes at Random, and obeys blindly, may give great Satisfaction to Churchmen; but he neither knows the Goſpel of Truth, nor obeys the Precepts of the Holy Ghoſt.

It is a ſurprizing Thing, the Selfiſhneſs and Pride of Man! What Prieſt is there that (in Diſputes of the moſt trivial Nature) does not grow hot and eager for Victory, and angry if his Opinion does not prevail? In Spiritual Affairs, this Spirit of levelling all Men

to our own Conceits, is ſtill fiercer; and Religion, which was given and intended to ſubdue the Paſſions, is turn'd into an Engine to raiſe them. We are much more zealous that Men ſhould conform to us than to Holineſs, and would rather have them obedient than godly. How many High-Church Parſons would not rather ſee their Pariſhioners *drunken Churchmen, than ſober Diſſenters?*

Laymen are at leaſt as capable of judging of *Error* as the Clergy, and more proper, as having no Intereſt on either Side of the Queſtion. However, the Latter have uſurped this Privilege wholly to themſelves, and with good Policy; for it has wonderfully anſwer'd their great Ends of Power and Wealth. We are not therefore to wonder that many of them give much more Countenance and Quarter to the moſt heinous Immoralities, which are only Sins againſt God, than to the leaſt Variation from an Orthodox Opinion, which is an unpardonable Sin againſt Themſelves. The greateſt Miſtakes, when involuntary, are innocent in the Sight of God; but in the Eyes of the Prieſts, the ſmalleſt are often damnable. Nay, many a Man has been pronounced a Heretick, and deliver'd to Hell and the Devil, for his pious Searches after Truth, and his devout Adherence to it.

Thus we ſee that God may be pleas'd, and ſome of the Clergy provok'd, by one and the ſame

ſame Action. From hence it wofully happens, that weak Men and Profligates, who will do and ſay as they are bid, without any Biaſs from Reaſon and Conſcience, are careſs'd, encourag'd and promoted; while the Wiſe and Virtuous, who cannot abandon Truth and the Fear of God, to promote the Craft, and humour the Pride of aſſuming Men, are brow-beaten, reproached and perſecuted. Mr. *Whiſton*, and the Parſon of his Pariſh, are known Inſtances of this ſhameful Truth.

I know ſeveral, who, notwithſtanding their avow'd Disbelief of the Goſpel and all Reveal'd Religion, are in high Eſteem with the High Clergy; becauſe, tho' they deny our Saviour, they reverence his Succeſſors; and are zealous for the Hierarchy, tho' they laugh at Religion. The Truth is, if a Man is but a hearty Churchman, it is never asked whether he is a Chriſtian. Profligates, void of common Honeſty, and common Senſe, have been, and are ſtill, reckon'd True Friends to the Church, and courted by the Eccleſiaſticks, as their Patrons and Defenders. And indeed, where Religion is turned into Faction, ſuch Meaſures and Alliances are natural and neceſſary.

But, in the Opinion of us Chriſtians, a wicked Liver, whether he is a Believer or no, is an Enemy to Religion, which is propagated and ſupported by Example; and to human Society, which is maintain'd by the

Bonds of Morality. Whereas a good Man, though a Heretick, is a Friend to Religion, Virtue, and his Country. To conclude: He who is a Rebel to the King of Kings, is like to prove but an ill Subject to his Vicegerent, and as bad a Pattern to his Fellow-Subjects.

NUMBER XXVII.

Wedneſday, July 20. 1720.

Of FASTING.

MR. *Burnet* tells us, in his *Letters of Travels*, that the Prieſts of *Italy* have found out a Secret to make Men miſerable, in ſpight of all the Abundance and Profuſion wherewith Nature hath bleſſed that happy Climate: They meaſure their own Happineſs by the Peoples Calamity; enjoy no Pleaſures in which they take any part; nor are ſatisfied with all the Plunder and Depredations they make upon them, unleſs they can alſo heighten their own Reliſh, by making the little they leave to the Laity, inſipid and taſteleſs.

As

As one Inſtance of this Truth, he informs us, that the Prieſts have made it a Principle of Religion in the People, to mingle Water with their Wine in the Cask, which ſoon ſours it; whereas they always keep their own pure and unmix'd, becauſe they ſay it is to be uſed in the Sacrament; and ſo he obſerves, that Travellers can drink no good Wine, but what they buy from the Convents.

For this and ſuch like Reaſons they preach Penances, Mortification, Faſting, and a Contempt of worldly Riches, and of all thoſe earthly Bleſſings, which indulgent Heaven has given to wretched Mortals, to alleviate their Sorrows, ſweeten their Calamities, and make the nauſeous Draught of Life go down; whereas we cannot better ſhew our Acknowledgments and Gratitude to Providence, than by making a proper Uſe of the good Things he has given us, and by enjoying them in every Degree, which will not deſtroy that Enjoyment, and change it into a Misfortune.

If we drink or eat more than our Heads will carry, or our Stomachs digeſt, Diſtempers, Indiſcretions, and ſometimes Murthers ſucceed; and if we ſpend faſter than our Incomes will ſupply, there is a ſure Foundation laid for future Want and Miſery: But nothing can be more abſurd or impious, than to make Abſtinence from Food or Pleaſures meritorious, any farther than it conduces to Health,

Health, or qualifies us for Buſineſs. Almighty God reſerved but one Tree in all *Paradiſe* from our firſt Parents; but the Prieſts would keep them all from their Poſterity.

Beſides, the Luxury of the Rich (when it does not exceed the Bounds of Vertue and Prudence) is the Wealth and Support of the Poor, and the beſt judged Charity: For, what we give in groſs Sums to, or for the Uſe of, thoſe who appear to be in Neceſſity, is often miſtaken, and applied to maintain preſent Idleneſs, or reward paſt Extravagance; and ſometimes too, I doubt, is pocketed by thoſe who are truſted to diſtribute it; whereas whatever is laid out upon the Produce of Labour, and for ſuch Manufactures as employ Multitudes of People, can never be miſapplied. It might eaſily be made appear, that there is not a Piece of Wrought Silk, Linnen, or Woollen Cloth, which has not contributed to the Maintenance of more than an Hundred Thouſand induſtrious People, who muſt be all kept alive one Way or other.

As it is the higheſt Crime to deſtroy our Beings, ſo it is proportionably wicked to endeavour to make them miſerable: The Glory and Honour of God are beſt conſulted, in promoting the Happineſs of Mankind. It is profane, and a kind of Blaſphemy, to attempt to perſuade People, that the good God takes Pleaſure in the vexing and tormenting his Creatures: He is not pleaſed by human

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Sacrifices, nor by human Sufferings of any Kind: A pale Aſpect, the Griping of the Guts, wry and diſtorted Faces, and being Ghoſts before our Time, will contribute to no Ends of Religion; and therefore, I confeſs, that I cannot ſee how Faſting can ſerve God, or anſwer any Purpoſes of Devotion, or indeed can enhance any Appetite, unleſs to a good Dinner.

Nothing conſequently can be more ridiculous, than for the *Romiſh* Clergy to tell us, that any Part of Religion conſiſts in faſting Days, and faſting Weeks; which oblige the wretched People to inſipid and unwholſome Diet, whilſt they indulge themſelves, and riot in the richeſt Wines, and the luxurious Diſhes of Salmon and Turbatt, with all the coſtly Inhabitants of the Liquid Element: Beſides, it is impolitick, as well as uncharitable; it diſcourages Trade and Induſtry, depopulates Nations, and depreciates Matrimony, by rendring the People unable to maintain and raiſe their Families.

Riches and Labour are two Words which ſignify the ſame Thing. Nature ſpontaneouſly ſupplies but little to the Uſe of Man; all the reſt is the Produce of Invention and Induſtry: And therefore whatever does contribute to make Mankind idle and leſs uſeful to one another, conduces ſo far to their Want and Miſery. One Holy Day, ſtrictly kept, robs the Poor of more than a whole Year's Charity will ſupply. A little looſe

Money

Money pick'd up at the Church-Doors, and afterwards divided between the Parſon, Church-Wardens, and a few favourite Objects, will make but poor Amends for the Taxation of the Nation, and of every Perſon in it, with the Loſs of a Day's Labour, and Profit of his Trade; which Loſs probably cannot amount to leſs than Two Hundred Thouſand Pounds; without having any Regard to the Extravagance and Debaucheries committed upon thoſe Days, which often conſume the Acquiſitions of a Week, and render the common People liſtleſs, and unwilling to return to their Labour again. I may therefore venture to affirm, that there is more Charity in taking away one Saint's Day, than in building and endowing Twenty Colleges.

However, to do Right to my Countrymen and their genuine Clergy, I muſt freely confeſs, that we ſuffer very little from the Penitential Obſervance or Faſting Part of our Holy-Days; for the Poor do not faſt at all, unleſs they can get nothing to eat; and the Rich, in Imitation of their Guides, hold out no longer than is neceſſary to digeſt their former Exceſſes, and get better Stomachs to a double Dinner; as old experienc'd Sinners often live a Day or two with Sobriety and Innocence, to enjoy a Debauch the remaining Part of the Week. At the Univerſities, as I am told, it is quite given up, and there is not more *Epicuriſm* than on thoſe Days;

and

and to their Churches there are ancient Veſtries annex'd, which are the conſecrated Repoſitories of Pipes, Sack and Tobacco, where the Reverends take regularly a Whiff and a Cup, to prepare them for the Fatigues of the enſuing Service.

But how little ſoever Holy-Days and ſtated Faſts contribute either to the Temporal or Eternal Happineſs of the Laity, yet the *Romiſh* Clergy have been able ſufficiently to find their own Account in them: When all other Shops are ſhut, theirs are open; where they ſell their Spiritual Cargo of Grimaces, Viſions, Beads, Indulgences, and Maſſes, for Silver and Gold, Lands and Tenements; and to enhance the Value of their Merchandize, and perſwade the People of the Reaſonableneſs of ſuch an Exchange, they make it their Buſineſs, and exert all their Endeavours, to depreciate worldly Happineſs, and cry down all the good Things of this Earth, that they may have them all to themſelves. If they can extinguiſh the Appetites God has given us, and teach us the Secret to live without our Eſtates, or to make us think it dangerous to live on them, they hope to have them for their Pains; for who can have a better Title to our Superfluities than our ſpiritual Guides, who have inſpired us with ſo much refined Devotion, and have given to us laſting Eſtates in Paradiſe, in lieu of a few momentary Pleaſures, and frail and earthly Tabernacles below?

By

By these Arts, and many others, which I shall shew in the Progress of this Paper, the Priests are become possessed of so much Dominion and Wealth.

NUMBER XXVIII.

Wednesday, July 27. 1720.

Of AUTHORITY.

BY Faith is often, if not most commonly, meant, an inward Persuasion or determined Assent of the Mind to a religious Proposition affirm'd, or deny'd; and such Consent can never be given but by the Conveyance, and from full Conviction, of the Senses, or the manifest Operation of the Holy Ghost; and therefore must depend wholly upon what appears to be infallible Inspiration, or infallible Information. In this Sense of the Word, I doubt there can be no such thing in the World; for as no Man living ever saw

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the Miracles of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, or can prove his particular Syſtem from ſelf-evident Propoſitions, or can be ſure he is inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt; ſo he cannot have Faith in this Senſe, whatever he himſelf may imagine.

Therefore the only reaſonable Senſe of the Word is, *An Aſſent of the Mind to the Truth of a Propoſition upon probable Arguments, or upon the Teſtimony of other Perſons*; which can never produce Certainty, but only *Opinion* or *Belief*; which muſt be ſtronger or weaker, according to the many Degrees of Probability. A probable Evidence can only produce a ſuitable Aſſent; and when any thing does not appear at all probable to us, we cannot avoid diſſenting as to the Truth of it. Almighty God does not require of us to give the Lye to our Underſtandings, and to put out and extinguiſh the only Light he has given to Men, by which they can diſcern Truth from Falſhood, and Vertue from Vice.

The Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, who were evidently endowed from Above with extraordinary Gifts and Graces, were undeniable Witneſſes of the Truth of the Goſpel, to thoſe who ſaw their Miracles: And their Writings, and the Teſtimony which they bequeath'd to their Followers, ſealed, as it was, with their Blood, have paſſed the Examination of many Ages, and conſtitute the higheſt Degree of human Probability; and conſequently carry

along

along with them an irreſiſtible Authority, and can admit of no Diſobedience or Diſpute: They are a real Authority, in the moſt ſtrict Senſe of the Word; I mean, as it is apply'd to the Propagation of Religious Opinions, and as producing a lively Faith next to Perſuaſion.

But no Deciſions or Reſolutions of uninſpired Men are, or ought to be, of any Weight with us, but ſo far as they will bear the Examination of our Senſes and our Reaſon. The only Motive any Man can have to believe, or to put this Confidence in another, is, that the Perſon truſted is not deceived himſelf, and will not deceive him; neither of which he can have any tolerable Aſſurance of: for no Man is infallible, and the graveſt and moſt ſolemn Pretenders are as eaſily cheated as the meer Vulgar; and, what is more, will as often lye and cheat others; and therefore there can be no ſuch Thing as Authority in this Senſe amongſt Men: For let a Matter in it ſelf be ever ſo certain, I am by no Precept human or divine obliged to believe it true, till it is proved true; and it is the Buſineſs of my Reaſon alone to diſtinguiſh what is ſo from what is otherwiſe.

God's Word, though to be believ'd without Proof, yet ought firſt to be proved to be his; which Proof, it is the Province of my Underſtanding to examine. The Words and Allegations of Men, or of the Church, ought, before they are believ'd, to be prov'd, either by

by divine Authority, or by Reaſon: If by Reaſon; then Reaſon muſt judge of Reaſon, and every Man who has it is a Judge: If by Divine Authority; even here our Reaſon muſt be ſatisfied, whether it is Divine Authority or not. So that human Authority is either nothing at all; or at moſt only an Opportunity given, or an Invitation made, to examine by private Judgment, the Truth of what it ſays.

All Books therefore, except the Holy Scriptures, and all Names, except thoſe of our bleſſed Saviour and his inſpired Followers, ought to be of no Authority with us, any farther than to convince our Underſtandings by ſolid Arguments, and ſelf-evident Truths; and a Beggar or a Cobler, when he can do this, is ſo far intitled to equal Credit, or, if you will, to equal *Authority*, with Councils and Fathers.

Every Man, that reaſons with you, appeals to your Reaſon, and his Arguments lie at your Mercy, whether you will believe them or no; and every Man who brings you only his Aſſertions, ought alſo to bring you his Proofs, or elſe you are at full Liberty to reject or deſpiſe them: It adds nothing to his Weight in this Matter, that perhaps he wears a *Cloven Cap* or a *Sable Gown*: There have been no greater Deceivers of Mankind, than ſuch as have worn theſe Emblems of Gravity; and indeed Gravity has ever been one eſſential Characteriſtic of Impoſture.

There is no Authority in ſounding and ſanctified Names, whether they be thoſe of *Archbiſhops*, *Biſhops*, *Prieſts*, or *Deacons*. It is very certain, theſe goodly Words are ſo far from having any Charm in them againſt Deceit and Roguery, that the compleateſt of all Villanies, and the moſt maſterly and miſchievous of all Deluſions, have been, and ſtill are protected and propagated by them in *Popiſh* and other Prieſt-ridden Nations. *His Holineſs* and *Moſt Holy*, are Terms appropriated to St. *Peter*'s Chair, (and in our precious Pope *Laud*'s Days they began to be current at *Lambeth*) altho' moſt that fill'd that Chair, have liv'd at Defiance with God and Man, and were the greateſt Deceivers and Diſturbers of the World.

Nor is there any certain Authority in Learning of any kind or degree. Who are better Scholars, or greater Rogues, than the *Jeſuits*? Who was a more learned Man, or a greater Simpleton, than Mr. *Dodwell*? And, as to his genuine Anceſtors, *Aquinas* and *Scotus*, thoſe celebrated Founders of the Schools; who have been long the infallible Guides of the infallible Church; they were the moſt voluminous and moſt unintelligible Dunces that ever dabled in Sophiſtry, and darkened common Senſe.

Pray what Evidence of Truth neceſſarily attends the Knowledge of the Oriental Tongues? The *Jews* underſtand *Hebrew*, and the *Turks Arabick*; and yet both continue fierce and obſtinate Enemies to Chriſtianity.

Nor

Nor are Men the more to be truſted, merely becauſe they are acquainted with Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory and the Fathers. As to the Fathers, they are guilty of grievous Errors againſt Orthodoxy, and Church Power; inſomuch that Father *Petavius*, the Jeſuit, has pretended to prove that moſt of them were infected with Hereſy, eſpecially in their Notions about the Undivided Trinity. We all know, that St. *Auſtin* (the Foreman of all the *Latin* Saints and Fathers) was for admitting Children to the *Lord's Supper*, contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of our Church of *England* as by Law eſtabliſhed. St. *Jerom* derives Epiſcopal Power from the Inſtigation of the Devil, which is alſo an impudent Reflection upon our Orthodox Church. St. *Baſil* (I think it was) very fairly challenged the Emperor, his Liege Lord, to fight him; in defiance of the Doctrine of Paſſive Obedience, which is the peculiar Doctrine of our High Churchmen; and which unleſs a Man believes and practiſes, he cannot be ſaved. St. *Ambroſe* bullied *Theodoſius*, the *Lord's Anointed*; and refuſed to admit his Imperial Majeſty to partake of the Lord's Body, till he had made his humble Submiſſion. St. *Gregory Nazianzen* gives a miſerable and vile Character of Synods and Councils; and his Grace of *Canterbury*, when he was Biſhop of *Lincoln*, and before, did the ſame. Dr. *Prideaux* ſhews *Tertullian* to have been a credulous weak Man, often miſtaken and miſled.

As to Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, which is nothing but many large Volumes, containing ſome few of the Squabbles of the Biſhops and inferior Clergy with one another, and all the World; I know not whether the Uſe of it can much alter for the better any Man's Life and Principles; ſince the moſt he can learn by it is, that the Reverend Heroes of the Story were eternally cuffing and contradicting one another. Nothing of Humility, nor of Charity, nor of Uniformity, nor of Certainty, is to be found amongſt them, or learned from them. And I know not at this Day any prevailing Opinion of any Sect of Chriſtians, but what is both countenanced and condemn'd by one Father, or another.

Laſtly; even the moſt apparent Piety, the moſt diſintereſted Mind, and the moſt unblameable Life, tho' to me certain Signs of a good Man, yet in the Eye of our beſt High Church-Men, are only *ſhining Sins*, and cannot entitle the Poſſeſſor to the leaſt good Word or Tenderneſs; much leſs to any Authority amongſt Men. Dr *Clarke*, Mr. *Whiſton*, and others, are undeniable Inſtances of this Truth.

Upon the whole; Authority, as it is generally underſtood, is a Word pregnant with Danger and Nonſence. It is a falſe miſleading Light, or rather none at all; for thoſe who follow it, do only grope in the Dark: When we blindly truſt to another, our own Eyes grow uſeleſs, or may give offence.

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This ſhews its Peril; and for its Abſurdity, it will appear from hence, that it is impoſſible to truſt to one Authority, without truſting to more. For, either my own Reaſon muſt be conſulted and followed; and if ſo, there is an end of all Authority: Or elſe, I muſt truſt to ſome Authority to direct me what Authority I muſt truſt to. And, if I have Liberty to chuſe my firſt Guide, why not alſo my ſecond, and ſo on? For, no Reaſon can be given, why I may rely on my Judgment in one Caſe, and yet muſt reſign it in juſt ſuch another Caſe.

But if no Choice at all is left us in theſe Matters, pray how ſhall we diſcern Hereſy from Orthodoxy, and a *regular* Set of Eccleſiaſticks, from an *irregular*? If I am born in *Scotland*, and educated in the *Presbyterian* Way; muſt I continue in an invincible Antipathy to what is there called *proud*, *lordly Prelacy*, and ſuperſtitious Surplices, and Popiſh Ceremonies? Or, have I a Right to examine and embrace the Doctrine and Diſcipline of our Orthodox Eſtabliſhed Church? Or, am I to embrace them without examining them? And is my Judgment to approve and condemn, only what the Parſon approves and condemns; and, in all other Spiritual Matters, to lie ſtill and take its reſt? If I leave one Church for another, out of Judgment; how am I to behave my ſelf when my Judgment changes? Or, is it our Duty to conform, in ſpight of our Inclinations? And have we no

Right to diſſent with Conſcience and Conviction on our Side?

To conform without conſenting, is a Contradiction, and a Mockery to the Spirit of Religion: And to conform, becauſe I approve, is no Compliment to Authority, but, indeed deſtroys it, and juſtifies every Man in every Religion, provided he has taken all neceſſary Pains to find out the true one. If I have a Liberty to enquire which is the beſt Church, I have alſo a Liberty to blame its Errors, if I ſee any, as well as to admire its Excellencies; And the Authority of no Man or Men ſhall determine me in either, in Oppoſition to my Reaſon. If I praiſe the Advantages of any Church, I am my ſelf praiſed by its Votaries, for doing Juſtice to thoſe Advantages, which my Reaſon ſhews me: But if the ſame Reaſon diſcovers Blemiſhes in it, I am condemned by the ſame Votaries, for what I cannot help. So that I am applauded for Seeing, and damned for Seeing, at the ſame time, and from the ſame Principle; namely, that of Paſſion and Partiality.

There is therefore no Authority but two, Scripture and Reaſon. The Scripture is our Rule of Faith; and Reaſon, where God gives not his Spirit, is our Rule for underſtanding the Scripture.

Number XXIX.

Wedneſday, Auguſt 3. 1720.

Of Education.

IT has often been the Subject of my ſerious Thoughts, to what Cauſes are owing the Depravation of Virtue and Morality in the World, and the ſeeming Decay of Human Underſtanding. If we read the *Greek*, *Roman*, and other ancient Hiſtories, we ſhall find another Race of Men, than ſeem to be now exiſting upon the Face of the Earth. *Alexander* had conquered the *Eaſt* before Thirty; *Scipio* and *Hannibal* perform'd Actions of great Eclat before Twenty: *Pompey* triumphed over *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*, long before his Middle-Age. Indeed, thro' the whole *Roman* Story, we find their Generals, Orators, and Stateſmen, ſhone in full Luſtre in their early Youth; and could demand their Diſcharge from Publick Buſineſs,

before the Age at which we are often thought qualify'd to enter upon it.

This Difference ſure cannot be owing to any real Decay of Human Nature, which undoubtedly has been always the ſame ſince the Flood; on the contrary, 'tis to be preſumed, ſince Almighty God hath communicated to us the marvelous Light of his Goſpel, and has made himſelf more known to Men, that their Faculties are bettered and improved. Beſides, this Difference is obſervable only in ſuch as are entitled, by their Birth and Fortunes, to the moſt liberal Education; for, as to Arts and Sciences, the Moderns eminently (as I conceive) exceed the Ancient: They are better Mathematicians, and Mechanicks, better Navigators, better Muſicians, and better Husbandmen, and they attain early to their greateſt Perfection in theſe Arts; and therefore we muſt look out for other Cauſes to account for this *Phænomenon*, which I conceive to proceed only from their different Manner of Education.

The Ancients were inſtructed by Philoſophers, and the Moderns are taught by Prieſts: The firſt thought it their Duty to make their Pupils as uſeful as poſſible to their Country, and the later as ſubſervient to themſelves and the Intereſts of their Order: One endeavoured to inſpire them with noble and generous Sentiments, equally fit for Dominion or Subjection; and the Other always inſtill into them abject, ſordid and puſillanimous Principles, to qualify

fy them to be proper Tools for their own low Purpoſes: In ſhort, the firſt made it their Study and Buſineſs to enlarge and improve their natural Faculties, and growing Reaſon; and the latter to pervert, ſtifle and extinguiſh every Approach towards true Knowledge and publick Vertue.

As ſoon as the Emperors and their Courts came into the Church, Ambition and Pride got in too; and the Innocence and Simplicity of Primitive Chriſtianity became corrupted, and changed into outward Pomp and Pageantry: The Clergy bethought themſelves how (in the Modern Phraſe) *to make the beſt of their Bible*: Unluckily it was all againſt them; and tho' they read it over and over, they found it every where levelled againſt Spiritual Pride and Domination, and they could not ſo much as pick out one direct Text for that Purpoſe.

What muſt be therefore done in this momentous Affair? The Holy Writings were diſpers'd Abroad, and could not be ſuppreſſed, and yet Riches and Power were of indiſpenſable Neceſſity to the Good of the Church? Why! ſince they could not get them out of the Peoples Hands, they contrived how to render them of as little Uſe as poſſible there; and, in Order to it, they pointed all their Batteries againſt Human Reaſon, and Polite Learning, and made it an heinous Sin to read any Heathen Authors: By which Means, in an Age or two, few could

could read at all; and the *Romans*, ſo famous for Knowledge, Vertue and Humanity, became (for the moſt Part) ſunk to the loweſt Dregs of Barbariſm, Superſtition and Ignorance.

But leſt the curious and inquiſitive Part of Mankind ſhould not be wholly diverted from the Search after Knowledge, they invented and ſubſtituted in its Room, a ſenſeleſs Jargon of undefined, inſignificant, and canting Terms, confuſed Ideas, and indiſtinct Images; which they perſwaded the World to eſteem profound Learning and deep Wiſdom: And then they reduc'd and determin'd all Queſtions in Philoſophy and Religion by this Gibberiſh; and he got the Victory, who could hold out longeſt, and moſt confound his Auditory, by entangling them in an endleſs Labyrinth of Nonſenſe. Men of Wit and Genius were diſtaſted at a Study, which would coſt them ſo much Pains to attain, when they could find neither Pleaſure in the Purſuit, nor Profit or Improvement in the Conqueſt; and having no Notion of any other Learning, they conſented to let the Clergy have it all to themſelves.

When they had ſo reduced the Laity to this happy and deſirable State of Stupidity and Submiſſion, they took away their Bible from them too; or, which was the ſame Thing, they continued it only in a Language, which, by the many Conqueſts upon the Empire, and the Revolutions of Time, was un-

underſtood by none but themſelves. And now, having converted their Hearers into Aſſes, and Beaſts of Carriage, they bridled them, they ſadled them, they yoked them, and put heavy Burthens upon them, till they ſo overloaded the Jades, that they grew reſty, and overturned their Packs and Riders too.

Thus the World came by the Reformation; which diſperſed the thick Miſt of Superſtition and Ignorance, that then overſhadowed all *Chriſtendom*: The Laity were reſolved to be no longer hood-wink'd; but a general Diſpoſition aroſe in *Europe*, to revive ancient Learning and uſeful Knowledge: And the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors were ſought after, reſcued from Duſt and Worms, and diligently read. Many Princes promoted theſe Studies, and gave all due Encouragement to Virtue and Learning: But this noble Spirit of Liberty laſted no longer than the Lives of thoſe Princes, and while the Images of ſacerdotal Oppreſſions were deep engraven in Mens Minds; which, like all other Things, wore out by Degrees.

The *Unum Magnum*, neceſſary to ſecure all the reſt, was never thought of, or forgotten; which was to retrieve the Education of Youth out of the Hands of the Prieſthood, and to reform the Univerſities, (which were contrived and eſtabliſhed by Popes to ſupport their own Pride and Power over the unhappy Laity,) and inſtead of ſuffering them

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to continue Seminaries of Faction, Tyranny, and Eccleſiaſtical Uſurpations, to convert them into Schools of Virtue, Liberty, Knowledge, and true Religion: The old Leaven was permitted to remain, and the Clergy had ſtill left to them the Education of the Nobility and Gentry in moſt Countries; and they were educated accordingly.

It became a Maxim in the Univerſities Abroad, that thoſe, who were born to large Poſſeſſions and Eſtates, had no need of Learning; and ſuch were always encourag'd or conniv'd at in miſpending their Time in Idleneſs and Luxury, and were generally made the Companions of their Governors and Tutors in their Pleaſures, who were perpetually inſtilling into their tender Minds tyrannical or ſlaviſh Principles. But when they had to do with Youths of ſprightly Wit and Genius, who either, from their own Inclinations, or the impulſe of their Relations, would not be diverted from the Purſuit of Knowledge; they induſtriouſly put them upon a wrong Scent, and perplexed and confounded their Underſtandings with metaphyſical Whimſeys, and an artificial Cant; out of which many of them could never extricate their Senſes; and ſuch as did, ſpent often as many Years after they came into the World to do ſo, as they loſt before in the Univerſities, to be upon the Level with thoſe who had never been there.

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This ſoon became again the State of Learning and Knowledge amongſt the Nobility and Gentry: Either they had none at all, or ſuch as they were the worſe for having; inſomuch that thoſe, whoſe Birth and Fortunes intitled them to be Legiſlators and Governors of Mankind, were themſelves the Slaves and Dupes of Pedagogues and Chaplains, were contented to do all their Drudgery, and be humble Inſtruments to their Pride and Luxury.

However, as the Prieſts could not agree amongſt themſelves about ſharing the Laity, and, as Printing about this Time came into *Chriſtendom*, which made it impracticable to ſuppreſs all Copies of uſeful Books, or hinder them from being read; many Perſons have had the Vertue and Reſolution to oppoſe Clerical Uſurpation, and have kept alive ſome Spirit of Liberry, in ſpight of all the Efforts of Prieſtcraft and Deluſion, ever ſupported by worldly Intereſt, and too often by worldly Power.

It is a hard Circumſtance for Truth, that in moſt Countries it muſt ſubſiſt upon Converts; and Education, Intereſt and Authority muſt combine againſt it: But if, notwithſtanding all their Efforts, its own clear Evidence and irreſiſtible Authority can make ſuch a Progreſs in the World, what might we not expect, if the Approaches and Paſſages to it were made eaſy and advantageous, and proper Rewards and Encouragements given

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to the Promoters and Diſcoverers of ſuch Philoſophy and Knowledge, as will make Men uſeful to themſelves and their Country?

It cannot be doubted, but ancient Virtue and ancient Eloquence would revive again; the Nobility and Gentry of *Chriſtendom* would reſume their proper Stations; and exceed the inferior Part of Mankind, as much in Publick Spirit, Courage and Wiſdom, as they do in Fortune and Quality; and poſſibly might in Time as much outſhine the *Greeks* and *Romans* in thoſe great Endowments, as they are evidently outdone in ſuch Arts and Sciences, as the Prieſts do not pretend to teach, and ſeldom know any Thing of.

NUMBER XXX.

Wedneſday, Auguſt 10. 1720.

Of EDUCATION. *Part* 2.

NOT all the Cruelty of Tyrants, the Subtilty and Craft of Prieſts, or the Malice of Devils, have ever invented or brought a greater Plague or Miſchief upon Mankind, than falſe Learning: We may be upon our guard againſt all other Calamities; but here the Enemy is within us, and admitted at all times to the innermoſt Receſſes of our Souls, where he acts the Part of a treacherous Friend, betrays us under the Pretence of ſerving us, and adminiſters Poiſon in Cups of ſeeming *Nectar* and *Ambroſia*: We are gradually deprived of our Senſes, whilſt we think we are improving them; become Fools by Induſtry and great Application; like *Tantalus*, are ſtarved with an imaginary Banquet at our Mouths; and, in the midſt of an appearing

pearing Profuſion of Knowledge, want common Senſe; and, what is yet worſe, are inſenſible of our wanting Diſtemper, and conſequently are incapable of a Remedy.

Our Minds as well as Bodies are eaſily diſtorted, and put out of their natural Frame; Abſurdity and Nonſenſe is to be learn'd, and good natural Faculties may be improved into fooliſh Ones, or none at all. A Man, like a Veſſel, is capable of holding only a certain Quantity, which when it is full of one Liquor is incapable of receiving another; and even when the firſt is drawn out, it generally leaves a Tincture behind it. The Mind, when rightly ſet out, uſefully employ'd, and upon proper Objects, will improve, and every Day ſtrengthen; but when converſant only with Viſions, Phantoms and Whimſeys, will aſſimilate with the Company it keeps, and by Degrees looſes its diſtinguiſhing Faculty.

A proper Exerciſe, and a natural Uſe of the Limbs, give Health and Vigour, as well as Gracefulneſs and becoming Motion; whereas Grimace and abſurd Poſture, are Qualifications only for Jack-Puddings and Merry-Andrews. One who has been long taught by an ill Maſter, is farther from a good Dancer, than another who has never begun; becauſe he muſt unlearn all his ill Habits, to be in the Circumſtance of him who has not learn'd at all; as a Man who gets out of his Road, is farther from his Journey's End, than

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if he had ſtaid at Home; and commonly muſt return hither again, to find out his right Way.

Whoever ſpends his Time in reading fooliſh Books, and in ſtudying uſeleſs or falſe Speculations, will grow the greater Coxcomb, the greater Progreſs he makes: He is learning backwards, and undermining and deſtroying the firſt Sparks, innate Principles, or Capacity of Knowledge, and in time will be fortify'd and impregnable againſt common Senſe. A great Philoſopher tells us, that Ignorance is a middle State between Knowledge and falſe Learning; that is to ſay, one who is wholly untaught and unimproved, is as much above a Learned Man, in the common Acceptation of the Word, as a Man well educated does exceed another who has had no Education at all: The Capacity of the firſt is entire, and ſuſceptible of Information; whereas in the other, all the Avenues and Paſſages to Wiſdom are deſtroy'd or lock'd up, and he is ſo puzzled, perplexed and confounded in a Maze of improved Nonſenſe and Abſurdity, that he can never get through it, or out of it. The Acquiſitions in ſuch Learning have been aptly compared to the fluttering and rumbling of a Swallow falling down a Chimney, who, when he is at Bottom, flies about, and hurries backwards and forwards to every Window, and every Corner of the Room, to make his Eſcape, but never thinks of the

Way he came in, and ſo becomes an eaſy Prey to the firſt Enemy which aſſaults him.

Whoever is converſant with Scholaſticks, and has any Underſtanding of his own, (if ſuch a Correſpondence can poſſibly be) muſt readily aſſent to this Truth. It is even grown a Proverb in the Learned Language, that, *Merus Scholaſticus eſt merus Aſinus*: What an Appearance do theſe Reverend Drones and accompliſh'd Dunces make amongſt Mankind? How are they exceeded in Converſation, agreeable Addreſs, and uſeleſs Knowledge, by the youngeſt Gentlemen, by Soldiers and Merchants, and often by Mechanicks and Tradeſmen, who can only write and caſt Accompts? Nothing but the Solemnity of their Habits, and the auſtere Gravity of their Phiz, Mien and Behaviour, hinders them from being the Jeſt and Contempt of Women and Boys. It is ſaid, *Villiers*, Duke of *Buckingham*, once took a Conceit to invite all the deep Chins about the Town to a magnificent Entertainment ſpread upon a long Table; and he made himſelf amends, by ſitting at the upper End, and enjoying the Viſto. Indeed I cannot deny, but I have ſometimes had ſuch a ſort of ill-natur'd Pleaſure, in imagining that I ſaw ſome of the Governors of the Two Univerſities (with others of their Betters, who ſhall be nameleſs) uncaſed of their reverential Robes, and dreſſed up with Hats and Feathers, Sword-knots, and laced Coats, and in that Equi-

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page marching in ſolemn Dump, like a Call of Serjeants from *Temple-Bar* to *Weſtminſter*.

They give us, in ſome Degree, the ſame Figure, when they ſhew in the Grand Monde: Like Snails, they carry their Houſes about them, and bring Pedantry, Conceit, ſour Humour, Bigotry, magiſterial Grimace, and ill Manners, into all Converſations where they have to do; and indeed are not fit for any, till they have been often kick'd out of it. They have neither the Temper of Chriſtians, the Reaſon of Philoſophers, or the Affability of Gentlemen, and therefore are juſtly deſpiſed by them all. *Fryar John*, as I remember, asks of *Panurge* or *Pantagrouel*, in *Rabelais*, what is the Reaſon that the Houſhold Prieſt is uſed worſe than any one elſe in the Family? And, I think, he anſwers, becauſe he neither ploughs the Ground like the laborious Ox, carries Burthens like the uſeful Horſe, nor keeps the Door like the faithful Dog; but, like the Monkey, runs about every where fouling the Houſe, chattering and making a Noiſe, biting People's Fingers, and doing nothing but Miſchief; and ſo every Body has a Stroke at him, and gives him a Knock as he paſſes by.

The Writings of many of theſe ſolemn Gentlemen are of the ſame Kind, and carry the ſame tragical and grim Aſpect. They would be Dictators in Faith and Science, and ſo their Books are full of the Spirit of Pe-

dantry, falſe Zeal, and Ill-breeding; and, under the Appearance and Affectation of Learning, contain only Paradoxes, Uncertainty, harſh Severity, or awkward Buffoonery. Any one, who is the leaſt acquainted with theſe dogmatical Zealots, theſe punning Inquiſitors, muſt own, that I have done Juſtice to their Characters, and the Merit which runs through them; unleſs in ſome Inſtances, moſtly about this great Town, where an uncommon natural Genius, Liberty of Mind, generous Birth, or a free Converſation, have got the better of a conſtrain'd and corrupt Education.

I thank God, ſuch as have of late Years had the Honour of being admitted to great Dignities, and been brought into the Legiſlature or Royal Councils, are of the latter ſort: But what Figure have others formerly made in the Senate Houſe, or Council Board? How much below young Noblemen, who had never been at the Univerſities, or had juſt forgot what they had learned there, and rubb'd or fil'd off College Ruſt by polite Converſation? In One, you might have obſerved an Eaſineſs of Addreſs, Softneſs of Speech, and Freedom of Thought; in the Other, Starchneſs of Behaviour, Sourneſs of Looks, and ſtarved Conceits, urged with fierce and impetuous Rage. A late Noble and great Genius of our Age and Country, compares them to thoſe Groteſque Figures, and Dragons-Faces, which are often ſeen in the

the Frontiſpice, and upon the Corner-Stones of old Buildings: They ſeem placed there as the Defenders and Supporters of the Edifice; but with all their Grimace, are as harmleſs to People without, as they are uſeleſs to the Building within.

NUMBER XXXI.

Wedneſday, Auguſt 17. 1720.

Of CEREMONIES.

PLAINNESS and Simplicity are not more inſeparable Marks of Truth, than they are of true Religion, which wants neither Paint nor Pageantry to recommend it ſelf to the Hearts of Men. It wins the Affections, by the Force of its Perſwaſions; and the Underſtanding, by the Reaſonableneſs of its Precepts. It abhors Violence, as oppoſite to its Nature; and deſpiſes Art and Policy, as below its Dignity. Human Ornaments may

hide and disfigure, but cannot preſerve nor improve its intrinſick Beauty, and divine Luſtre: And Pomp and Grimace, as they are no wiſe a-kin to it, ſo neither are they the Effects of it, nor bring any Advantage to it. On the contrary, they tend to fill the Mind with groſs Ideas, or ſullen Fear; and ſo create Superſtition inſtead of Piety, and Farce inſtead of Worſhip.

God himſelf has told us, that he will be worſhipped *in Spirit and in Truth*: Which ſhews, that Love and Sincerity conſtitute Devotion, and that Religion reſides in the Mind. As to Bodily Religion, and Corporeal Holineſs, the Goſpel is ſilent about them; leaving every one at full Liberty to behave his own Way in the *Practice of Piety*.

It is juſtly eſteemed the Glory and Felicity of the Chriſtian Religion, that by it we are releaſed from the grievous Yoke and Bondage of Ceremonies, which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear. It is a Religion of Reaſon, void of all Superfluities, and trifling Impertinences.

Men cannot judge of one another's Thoughts and Inclinations, but by Words and Actions: And, becauſe it would be both troubleſome and ſilly to be on every Occaſion haranguing our Friends and Superiors, upon the profound Veneration which we profeſs for their Perſons or Characters; it has become neceſſary to agree upon ſome outward

outward Forms, to denote internal Reſpect. And this I take to be the only good Reaſon which can be given for ſuch Manner of Addreſs or Ceremony. It is ridiculous, either by Sounds or Geſtures, to tell a Man over and over again, what he knows already; and therefore, the moſt intimate Friends and old Acquaintance make but little Uſe of Shew or Complement; and thoſe, who make moſt, are ever found the leaſt ſincere. But how ſenſeleſs and abſurd muſt it be to entertain Heaven with ſuch Grimaces! That Heaven, which ſearches our Hearts and knows our moſt hidden Thoughts; and will not be deceived by outward, arbitrary and fallacious Marks of inward Diſpoſition!

It can never be conceived, that the All-merciful and Omniſcient God ſhould, by the ſending of his Son, aboliſh, or ſuffer to be aboliſhed, the whole *Jewiſh* Legion of Ceremonies, tho' appointed by himſelf in Perſon; and ſhould graciouſly condeſcend to eſtabliſh a new Diſpenſation, deſtitute of all Ceremony and exterior Grandeur; and yet ſhould leave it to the Ambition of deſigning Men, or to the Folly of weak ones, to invent and impoſe a freſh Load of Rituals, in Oppoſition to the plain Genius of the Goſpel. This would be for the All-merciful, to be merciful in vain; for the Creator to reſign his Power to the Creature: and for God to recall his *own* Injunctions, which he once gave for a gracious and wiſe End, ſince ceaſ-

ed, that *Men* may enforce their's, for a weak or a wicked one.

Nothing is, or can be, pure Religion, but either what God commands and tells us he will accept; or what is dictated by eternal Reaſon; which is the Law of Nature: And whatever is ſuperadded, however dignified by a venerable Name, is no Part of true Religion; which, as has been ſaid, can be ſupported by nothing but *Divine Revelation*, or *Divine Reaſon*. When both theſe are wanting, we wander in the Dark, and worſhip blindfold; being led by the Hand of Conjecture and Invention, which are uncertain and endleſs.

This is ſo true, that where-ever there is true Religion, there are few Ceremonies: And, on the other Hand, where Ceremonies abound, there Religion is either utterly loſt, or miſerably decayed; and, in Popiſh Countries, it is more or leſs viſible, according as Ceremonies and Bigotry (which, like Cauſe and Effect, go always Hand in Hand) are more or leſs practiſed or promoted. Thus, in *France*, where, thro' the Commerce of that Kingdom with *Proteſtants*, there are ſtill ſome Remains of common Senſe, and conſequently of Religion; God Almighty is worſhipped as well as dead Men, tho' not ſo much: Whereas, in *Italy* and *Spain*, the Saints have deprived their Maker of all Devotion; and the *Bleſſed Virgin*, St. *Dominick*, St. *Jago*, and St. *Anthony*, are, by theſe hot-

hot-headed Bigots, made Governors of Heaven and Earth, and the Givers of Eternal Life; and consequently are become, next immediately after the Priests, the only Objects of their Adoration. If you deprive them of their Saints and their Ceremonies, there is not the least Face of Religion left amongst them.

So little has Christianity gained by Ceremonies, that a great Part of Mankind have, by Adopting them, banished all true Religion. If they were introduced, as it is alledged, to kindle Piety; I am sorry to say, it has so happened, that this Heat of Devotion has quite drank up the Truth and Vitals of Religion; and the blind Compliance with a senseless Cringe, invented and enjoyned by a Popish Priest, is made of more Importance and Merit, than the Possession of all Moral and Christian Vertues without it. Religion, good Sense, and Humanity, are inseperable Friends; but a superstitious Fondness for Ceremonies is a Contradiction, and an Affront to all the Three

The Teachers of Mankind have, for the greatest Part, been the most unteachable of all Men; and these our Guides to Peace have been always the Foremost to break it. They have seen, from Time to Time, the Violence and ungodly Effects produc'd by their Contention for Human Forms, Habits, and Decisions; and yet, where the *Religious Laity* and the *Law* did not interpose, to restrain

reſtrain this Unchriſtian Behaviour in *Churchmen*, they have not only ſtill adhered with Obſtinacy to their Inventions and Impoſitions, but frequently made it their Buſineſs to broach new ones, and to throw about freſh Balls of Strife and Cruelty.

Ceremonies were firſt brought in under a very plauſible Pretence; namely, that of aiding and promoting Religion: But we have ſeen, by above a Thouſand Years Experience, that theſe its pretended Friends always become its real Rivals and ſucceſsful Enemies; and by the Help of thoſe, whoſe Intereſt it was to contrive and ſupport them at any Rate, never failed to baniſh it as far away as their Power extended.

It is pretended, that the Invention of ſtated Ceremonies and Garments, is juſtified by theſe Words of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *Let all Things be done decently, and in order*; which Words are only a Precept to avoid Immodeſty and Confuſion, in their religious Aſſemblies. Two, for Example, were not to ſpeak at the ſame Time: One was not to ſing Pſalms, while another prayed. Neither Love nor Trade was to be the Buſineſs of their Meetings; nor Tithes and their own Power the Drift and Buſineſs of the Preachers: Chriſt was not to be confounded with *Belial*; nor Pride and Dominion with Meekneſs and Chriſtianity: Exhorting was not to be mix'd with Railing, nor Praying with Curſing; nor were the People to be taught

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to hate one another: In ſhort, God was to be adored with the Heart and Affections, and not with a Fiddle, or a Pipe and Tabor.

I do not find, that the Apoſtle's Words were underſtood in any other Senſe than this, by thoſe to whom they were addreſſed: It does not appear that immediately upon the Sight of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle, the *Corinthians* concluded that Prayers ſhould be ſaid in Surplices; and that the Faithful, as ſoon as the Word was given, ſhould kneel, ſtoop and ſtand, or turn to the Right or Left, like a File of Muſqueteers; or that they were to nod towards the Eaſt, as if the Almighty kept his Court only there.

Nor were the *Corinthians* directed by this Text to play *Popiſh* Tricks over the Forehead of a Babe baptized, as *ſure and certain Signs* of Regeneration: Nor were they commanded to put up their Petitions in Quavers, and to ſing their Prayers as well as ſay them; nor was that ſubtle Diſtinction then and there found out, of bowing at the Name of *Jeſus*, but not at the Name of *Chriſt* or of *God*.

All theſe pretty Faſhions were unknown to the Apoſtle and his Correſpondents; and their Genteelneſs and *Significancy* have been long ſince diſcovered by the *Romiſh* Clergy in the latter Days; and indeed, it is now become impoſſible to make one's Court well without them.

The Words *Decorum* and *Significancy*, which are made uſe of to juſtify the Celebration

bration of Ceremonies, are Words of ſuch prodigious Latitude, that the World does not agree, nor ever can agree, what it is that does come properly under their Denomination, and what does not. With the *Turks*, it is *decent* to be covered at Devotion; with *us*, to be bare-headed. How is the wearing of a Periwig, or a Cap, more *decent* and orthodox than the wearing of a Hat? How is a Prunella Gown, or a Lawn Frock more ſignificant than a Cloth Coat? Is God Almighty better pleaſed with a Cambrick Band, than with a Muſlin Cravat? And is an Organ-Loft more acceptable to him, than plain Country Piety, that has neither Motion nor Muſick in it?

If Men are at Liberty to invent and enjoin *one* unneceſſary Ceremony, why not *two*? And if two, why not two Thouſand? When ſuch a Power was once granted, it cannot be eaſily, nor indeed reaſonably limited. If the Clergy can oblige me to throw my Head into my Boſom, upon their pronouncing certain Sounds; they may, by the ſame Right, upon pronouncing different Sounds, oblige me to run it againſt a Stone Wall: Nay, which is ſtill worſe, whoever has an Authority to direct my *Manner* of Worſhip, muſt have alſo a Power to direct the *Matter* of it, and may *command* me WHOM to worſhip as well as HOW.

Superſtition in the People, and Power in the Prieſts, were the true Ends and Conſequences

quences of creating *Popiſh* Ceremonies; for, as to their Significancy, it was a meer Bubble and Pretence. Such a Plea would juſtify endleſs Phrenzy and Fooleries; and every Madneſs would be made a Myſtery. For Inſtance; we might be made to walk barefooted into the Church, to *ſignify* the Sanctity of the Place; and to crawl upon all Four out of it, to *ſignify* the Humiliation of our Hearts. A Match of Cudgel-playing every *Sunday* might be inſtituted, to *ſignify* our ſpiritual Warfare; and a Game at Blindman's-Buff, to *ſignify* the Darkneſs of our Underſtandings. In ſhort, any Thing might be made to *ſignify* every Thing; and any Puniſhment be inflicted upon the profane *Gainſayer*: And upon this Foot may be juſtify'd all the *Pagan* and *Popiſh* Fopperies that ever were, or ever could be invented; and nothing can be ſaid againſt all the many Garments, and many Colours, and many antick Geſtures, uſed by the *Romiſh* Prieſts at this Day.

It muſt be evident to every intelligent Man, that all this pretty Pageanty and *Raree-Shew*, can never make Men more acceptable to God, who will not be gratified or obliged by a Jigg or a Tune. But, I believe I may ſafely affirm, that if all this Merry-making and jovial Devotion in the *Popiſh* Churches do no manner of Good, they muſt needs do Harm; becauſe they divert the Mind from deliberate Devotion and

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calm Repentance, and can at beſt only work it up to a wild and enthuſiaſtick Worſhip.

However, tho' this pompous Parade in Piety does no Service to Religion, it effectually anſwers the End propoſed by it; and contributes vaſtly, as every Thing elſe does, to the Advancement and Grandeur of the *Romiſh* Clergy; as it turns Mens Thoughts from divine Objects to a ſuperſtitious Veneration for Poſtures, Habits, Grimaces, Cringes, Utenſils, *&c.* all invented by Prieſts, who are always ſure to appoint themſelves Maſters of the Ceremonies, and to be well paid for their deep Knowledge in this momentous Science: Beſides, it liſts into their Service great Numbers of People; ſuch as Organiſts, Fidlers, Singing-Men, with all the piping and chanting Crew, as well as Artificers of various Kinds. It engages Men of Pleaſure, and Ladies, in their Intereſts; and it catches the Mobility by the Ears and Eyes, and ſets them a ſtaring; and it alleviates their own Drudgery of frequent Preaching and Praying: It alſo ſerves the Purpoſes of Interludes in the perpetual Tragedies they are acting; which they render leſs terrible, by playing, like *Nero*, upon their Harps, in the Midſt of Conflagrations of their own making.

What a Bleſſing is it to this Church and Kingdom, that all this Farce in Devotion is forbidden by the *Act of Uniformity*, as well as by our *Homilies*; as ſhall be further taken Notice of, when I treat again upon the ſame Subject.

NUMBER

Number XXXII.

Wedneſday, Auguſt 24. 1720.

Of Ceremonies. *Part* 2.

MY laſt Paper treated of ſuperſtitious Ceremonies; and this ſhall contain a Proſecution of the ſame Subject.

The Pagan Religion conſiſted altogether in a vaſt Number and Variety of ſtrange and ſenſeleſs Ceremonies, and, being fooliſh and falſe, it could conſiſt of nothing elſe. Its Votaries had, for their Religious Task, certain frantick Actions to perform, certain wanton Motions to make, or certain mad Races to run; ſometimes galloping about the Streets like Lunaticks, ſtark naked, and ſometimes half naked; or in a religious antick Dreſs *ſignificantly* ſuited to their Behaviour. They were to be religious with their Heads, Feet, Joints, and their *other Organs*: They were

were alſo to utter certain harſh and devout Sounds, which had no Meaning, but were prodigious *ſignificant*; and being very ridiculous, were very *decent*.

During all this holy Exerciſe, which was edifying in Proportion as it was mad, their Minds were poſſeſs'd with a drunken Feſtivity and Wantonneſs, or with Crazineſs and Enthuſiaſtick Fear. They were either lewd or raving Rakes or Fanaticks. It never entred into their Heads, nor did their Prieſts ever put it into them, that Religion was a ſober Thing, conſiſting in the Exerciſe of Reaſon, and the Practice of Virtue. No; a Spirit of Sobriety, or a Ray of Underſtanding, would have blown up the Authority and Dominion of the *Heathen Parſons*; and therefore, the poor *Lay Pagans* were not ſuffered to know that a Man might be a religious Man, without being a good Dancer, and pleaſe God without Roaring and running Races.

This was the *Godly and wholeſome Diſcipline*, invented and inſtituted by the *Pagan Clergy*, for the Uſe and Edification of the deluded and idolatrous World. *Action* and *Outſide* was all they knew of Religion; and therefore their Superſtition took great Delight in building and beautifying Temples. They imagined, that the doing of a Thing, which had any Reference to Religion, was actually a Piece of Religion; and that any Jobb of Work about a Holy Place, was, in good

good Earneſt, a Jobb of Holineſs. They might have as rationally believed, that Maſons, Joyners, and Plaiſterers, employed about a Temple, derived Piety and Merit from that Employment.

Had not Pagan Ceremonies (and *Pagans* were the firſt Inventers of Ceremonies) ſignified nothing, or rather ſomething very bad, as indeed it was evident to every Eye, that they were either ſenſeleſs or impious; our Saviour would never have inſtituted, as he did, a Religion without one Ceremony in it. The Religion of the Goſpel is as pure from Fancies and Ceremonies, as from Pride and the Spitit of Dominion.

Our Bleſſed Saviour knew well, that the crafty and profane Prieſts had, by their ſhameleſs Inventions and filthy Ceremonies, polluted or aboliſhed all Religion; and therefore, in Mercy to Mankind, founded a Religion without Prieſts, and without Ceremonies: (as ſhall be fully ſhewn hereafter) For, it is to be obſerved, that while the Eſtabliſhed Church of *Paganiſm* flouriſhed, Prieſts and Ceremonies always flouriſhed or increaſed together.

Such was the ſimple Inſtitution of the Goſpel: But when *Papery* began to Elbow out Chriſtianity, Ignorance and Ceremonies were ſome of the principal Engines by which it effected the ſame. For, as the Meekneſs of Chriſtians was then converted into the Cruelty of *Barbarians*, and the Plainneſs of the

Goſpel into all the deteſtable Fopperies of *Paganiſm*; ſo Holineſs of Heart was changed into Holineſs of Poſture; the Humility of Soul into bodily Bowings; the Worſhip of God into the Worſhip of *Bread*, and the piping of Organs: And the Clergy, as they had called themſelves, were no longer cloathed with Meekneſs, but with *Surplices*, &c.

Nor was this mighty Revolution, this unnatural Tranſition from the Beauty and Gentleneſs of Chriſtianity, to the unhallowed Spirit and abominable Rituals of the Heathens, at all hard or impracticable: The People were, by the Idleneſs, Inſufficiency, and Debaucheries of the Eccleſiaſticks, become corrupt and blind to the laſt Degree, and therefore ran readily and chearfully into every new Abſurdity. Whatever the Biſhop pronounced *decent*, though ever ſo vile or ſilly, his conforming Flock received as *Reverend* and *Edifying*. A groſs and ſenſual Manner of Worſhip, ſuited beſt with the Groſſneſs of their Underſtandings, and the Senſuality of their Minds. They had no Conception of the Spiritual Nature of the Goſpel; and of that Evangelical Grace, which operates internally, and is wholly employed about the Soul, but produces neither Cringes, nor Dances, nor Grimaces.

A Religion therefore of Ceremonies, which is no Religion at all, agreed well with thoſe Carnal Chriſtians, who were taught to place all Religion in Ceremonies. When the ignorant

rant Vulgar are once perſuaded that Ceremonies are good for any Thing, they come quickly to think them good for every Thing; and *the more, the merrier!* They are delighted with Shadows and Myſtery, and *Hocus Pocus.* Ignorance, like every other Habit, is daily improving it ſelf, and encreaſes in Strength as in Years; it delights to be ſtill plunging into farther and deeper Darkneſs. The leſs People underſtand, the more they ſtare; and becauſe there is nothing in the Goſpel but plain Piety, plain Reaſon, and plain Matter of Fact; therefore it can raiſe no Wonderment in them, and conſequently no *pleaſing Piety:* But ſtrange and *myſterious* Ceremonies can do all this; and, for that Reaſon, have always got the better of Religion in all bigotted Countries.

Here therefore is a glorious and ample Field of Gaping, Sottiſhneſs, and Credulity, for crafty Prieſts to play their Tricks, and ſow Superſtition in. And, indeed, they have topped their Parts, in this Undertaking, with ſuch Dexterity and Succeſs, that their humble and reſigned Votaries do not any longer pretend to carry their own Eyes or Underſtanding: Their very Palates and Noſes are Prieſt-ridden, and dare neither Taſte nor Smell, without an *Eccleſiaſtical Licence.* Thus even the invincible Operations of the Animal Spirits, and of the Five Senſes, muſt ſtand ſtill, when commanded by the Prieſt, who can annihilate the Creature, and create his Creator.

As under the ſacred Name of God and Religion, the greateſt Irreligion and Impieties have been propagated; ſo, under the Colour and Umbrage of *ſignificant* and *decent* Ceremonies, the moſt ridiculous and immodeſt Uſages have been introduced. It would require more than a whole Paper to expoſe all the many Apiſh Geſticulations of the *Romiſh* Maſs; I ſhall only run over a few of them.

The Prieſt, in the Adminiſtration of Maſs, muſt wear a White Linnen Garment, which, I ſuppoſe, muſt ſignify *Whiteneſs*; for I cannot ſee a more obvious Meaning in it. The ſame was alſo worn by the primitive Heathen Clergy, when they butchered Bullocks, to appeaſe their Deities.

As he approaches towards the Altar, having great Devotion in his Back-Bone, he bows, and bows, and ducks his Head, as if he was playing at *Hop-Frog*. The Altar is alſo covered with a *Surplice*, or white Cloth, which, doubtleſs, ſignifies ſome great Myſtery; but, in profane Eyes, typifies only a Damask Table-Cloth. It moreover ſtands towards the Eaſt, which, to be ſure, has a deep Meaning, and ſeems to imply, as if God Almighty was either more merciful or more powerful in that Quarter of the World, (though he made it All) than in any of the other Three; or as if he liked that Climate beſt, and All thoſe who bow to it.

He then, after many Monkiſh Geſtures and Scrapings, ſays a world of ſhort Prayers, (the

(the whole Service being judiciouſly ſliced into pretty little Morſels of Devotion) and reads Scraps of Scripture; all which Prayings and Readings would not be half ſo Wholeſome any where elſe as they are juſt at the Elbow of the Altar. Then there is a lighted Candle ſtanding by him at Noon-Day, probably to ſignify that there is Light enough without it. Now, in ſome other Churches, the Altar is only illuminated with dark Candles, which, for ought I know, may be equally myſterious and ſignificant. But, upon this great and eſſential Point, I ſhall pronounce nothing dogmatically.

The Prieſt then mutters Words over the Bread and Wine, which thereupon ſtart into omnipotent Fleſh and Blood; and the living Jeſus is ſwallow'd Whole, in Remembrance of the dead One; and the Prieſt makes his Maker, and the People eat him. The Wine, which the Prieſt very naturally keeps all to himſelf, muſt not be poured out of a Bottle into a Glaſs, which would not be *ſignificant* enough; but out of a Flaggon, which, being of Silver or Gold and holding more Liquor, is conſequently very *ſignificant*. He repeats, *Lord have Mercy upon us*, very often, to *ſignify* that he does it more than once; and ſpeaks loud, to *ſignify*, that he may be heard.

But I am quite ſick of this ſtrange ſignificant Stuff, before I have gone thro' the Tenth Part of it. The whole Performance is perfect-

ly Theatrical, and improperly and impiouſly called a Sacrament. It is indeed a wretched, unentertaining Interlude; a ſtupid Farce, of which the Prieſt is the Chief Mimick; for Mumbling and making Mouths, does not deſerve the Name of *Acting*.

We have had ſeveral Attempts made to revive amongſt us this infamous Mummery in Devotion, and theſe Apiſh Ceremonies; which are an Affront to common Senſe, and below the Dignity of Human Nature, much more of Religion: But ſuch Attempts can never ſucceed, while we enjoy either Liberty or Knowledge. *Archbiſhop Laud*, therefore, when he had bewitched the Court, ſway'd the Scepter, and deſtroy'd the Liberty of the People and of the Preſs, took the beſt Opportunity he could get, to tranſport *Rome* to *Lambeth*; and having married the *Harlot*, he adopted her Trumpery.

A Sample of this Man's Genius for Popery may be ſeen in his mad Manner of Conſecrating ſome New Brick and Mortar which had been uſed in the Repair of St. *Catharine Creed Church*, *London*; as the ſame is related at large by *Ruſhworth*. At his Approach to the Weſt End of the Church, the Doors flew open, upon pronouncing certain Words out of the *Pſalms*, *That the King of Glory might enter*; and then entered the Biſhop, and falling down upon his Knees, baptized the Ground, or, which is the ſame Thing, pronounced it Holy, *in the Name of the Father, Son,*

Son, and Holy Ghoſt. Then he threw Duſt in the Air, and play'd ſome other pious Pranks. Then he pronounced many Curſes, and called upon the People to Curſe with him. Then he ſcatter'd a Basket-full of Bleſſings amongſt all the Maſons, and other Holy Mechanicks, who had helped to make that Church fine. He alſo went round the Church in Proceſſion, and told God Almighty and the People, over and over, that that was Holy Ground. At laſt, after a Bead-Roll of Prayers, and a Hundred and Fifty Bowings, and after many wild Geſtures, ſometimes advancing, ſometimes recoiling, like One affrighted and crazy, he gave the Sacrament.

Beſides all this, he removed the Communion-Table, and placed it in the Chancel Altar-wiſe, contrary to the expreſs Direction of the Rubrick; which ſays, it ſhall ſtand where Morning and Evening-Prayer is directed to be ſaid. He made Pictures of the Trinity, and cauſed them to be hung up in Churches; and was guilty of many other Popiſh Innovations, all tending to create Fanaticiſm and Superſtition.

This Paper grows too long, and leaves me no Room to do Juſtice to Croſſes, Square-Caps, and Fantaſtical Garments: all which, I warrant you, are profoundly Myſterious; tho' to Carnal Eyes, they ſeem only to *ſignify* to make the People ſtare: For every odd Sight ſtrikes the Imagination, and diſpoſes the Beholder either to Laughter or Reverence.

Nor have I Time to honour with a proper Encomium, that Ingenious and Eccleſiaſtical Device, of explaining the ſublime Myſtery of the Trinity by a Pair of Compaſſes, tho' it is above all Explication, and even of Conception, unleſs thro' Faith; and of repreſenting the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, by a Triangle in a Circle, over the Communion-Table. Was there ever ſuch a pretty Piece of pious Cunning! By the ſaid Triangle is typify'd and held forth to us, that the ſaid Triangle conſiſts of Three Angles; which is exceeding plain and edifying: And by the Circle is ſignified, that the ſaid Circle is but One Circle, which is prodigious good again! But, that a Triangle is a Circle, and a Circle is a Triangle, Dr. *Waterland* ſaith not.

I muſt, for the ſame Reaſon, paſs over unobſerved, the Praiſing of God with Organs, which our Homilies very uncivilly call Superſtitious; Cutts in the Common-Prayer Books, tending to prepare People for Idolatry; and Pictures in Churches, for the ſame devout Purpoſe.

NUMBER XXXIII.

Wedneſday, Auguſt 31. 1720.

The Ignorance *of the* High-Church Vulgar, *and its Cauſes.*

I Have always thought the beſt conſtituted Church in the World to be that, which forms and produces the moſt religious and moſt rational Members. Churches are Places where Men are, or ſhould be, taught the Love of God, and of Vertue; and when People have been long uſed to perform divine Diſcipline, and, as they imagine, receive Inſtruction in Moral and Evangelical Duties, in theſe ſtately Fabricks, they generally conceive a deep Reverence and Devotion for the Buildings themſelves, and for every Thing that is ſaid in them, as well as a great Opinion of the Wiſdom and Sanctity of the Teachers, who preſide there, and dictate *ex Cathedra*: They eſteem

eſteem them as Perſons ſent by God himſelf, to deliver a Meſſage from his own Mouth; for which alſo they have often the Word of the Preacher—No ſmall Reaſon to *the many* for the believing of it!

So that here is an uncontroulable Prepoſſeſſion in Favour of every Doctrine, or every Dream, which corrupt Prieſts ſhall think fit to deliver. And indeed, the High Church Clergy have never failed to make their Advantage of this ſuperſtitious Awe and Credulity of their Hearers; and to ſanctify every Falſhood, and every Whimſey and Impiety uttered by them, with a miſapply'd or perverted Text of Scripture; and ſo proſtituted and prophaned the high and holy Name of God, to patronize their Impoſtures. I ſhall give ſome Inſtances.

When they have had a Mind to flatter a a cruel or a fooliſh Prince, in order to make him ſerve their Purpoſes, and do their Drudgery; they have dubbed him inſtantly *God's Vice-gerent*, tho' he acted at the ſame Time by the Inſtigation of his Luſt or of Satan. And, becauſe *David* and *Saul*, being appointed by God himſelf, by Word of Mouth, were called the *Lord's Anointed*; therefore every Tyrant, who was not appointed by God himſelf, but ſeized a Crown by Violence or Surprize, became alſo the Lord's Anointed. And becauſe *Adam* was the Father of his own Son, therefore he was the King of his own Son; and therefore all ſuch Kings,

who

who had not *Adam* for their Father, were nevertheleſs, in Right of *Adam*, Kings and Fathers of their Subjects, who yet were not their Children, but for all that owed them the Duty of Children, whilſt they were plundering and ruining them; and all the Rapine and Murthers they were prompted to commit, by their Anger or their Avarice, were called the *Ordinances of God*, and were to be ſubmitted to, with *Chriſtian Stupidity*, on pain of Damnation; that is, it was made Damnation to reſiſt Actions and Cruelties which deſerved Damnation: And as you were to ſubmit to Law and Juſtice, on pain of Damnation; ſo ought you to ſubmit to the overturning of all Law, and all Juſtice, on pain of Damnation alſo. And, becauſe when we have any Matter of Complaint, we are bid to acquaint the Church with it; therefore the People, who are the Church, are, in every Caſe, to be determin'd by the Parſon of the Pariſh, who is not the Church. And, becauſe we are to confeſs our Sins one to another; therefore we are to do it to a Prieſt, which is not doing it to one another. And, becauſe *Abraham* gave the Tenth of his Plunder to *Melchiſedeck*, who was not a Prieſt of our Church by Law Eſtabliſh'd; therefore our Eſtabliſh'd Prieſts, who have nothing to do with *Melchiſedeck*, nor know any thing of him, have a Divine Right to the Tenth Part of every Man's Eſtate and Induſtry. And, as the Tribe of *Levi* had a Right to Tythes, tho' they

and

and their Tythes are long ſince aboliſhed; ſo ought our Parſons to have the ſame Tythes by the Goſpel, without being in the leaſt akin to *Aaron*'s Perſon, or Heirs to his Eſtate, or Succeſſors to his Inſtitution. And, though our Saviour's Kingdom is not of this World; yet the Kingdom of the High Clergy, who, if you will take their Words for it, are his Repreſentatives, is, and ought to be, of this World. And, becauſe the reprobate and gluttonous Monks had, by endleſs Rogueries, and diabolical Lies, plundered the deluded Laity of their Poſſeſſions, and engroſſed to themſelves moſt of the Lands of *England*; therefore our modern High Prieſts have a *natural* and *hereditary* Right to enjoy the ſame: And, tho' they have, upon Oath, renounced all Power, and all Pretence to Power, but what the Law vouchſafes to grant them; yet they have a Power independent on the Law, and Principles independent on theſe very Oaths, tho' renounced by theſe very Oaths.

All theſe, and many more Abſurdities, equally vile and impudent, have been blaſphemouſly father'd upon Scripture, and the Author of Scripture; tho' they all contradict the Scripture, as well as they do common Senſe and common Honeſty. But as the Vulgar do always take that to be the higheſt Point of Religion, about which their Teachers make the moſt Noiſe, for the Time being, whether it be Tythe, or Dr. *Sacheverel*, or the *Pretender*, or the late Duke of *Ormond*,

Ormond, or King *Charles the First*; ſo vicious and corrupted Clergymen, on their Part, have always tacked the Name of God, or, which is much more powerful with the Mob, the Name of the *Church*, to any Aſſertion, or any Claim, or any Invention of theirs, be it ever ſo monſtrous or miſchievous; and inſtantly it becomes, with weak People, an Article of Faith, upon which Salvation it ſelf depends. For, as it is their firſt Care, to force a Teſtimony from Heaven for every Whim, or Forgery of theirs; ſo their next Concern is, to make every Contradiction and Oppoſition to it, damnable.

Hence it comes to paſs, that the ſame Vertues are not of the ſame Importance at all Times; but Vertues are made Vices, and Vice is made Vertue, juſt as the preſent Temper, or the preſent Views prevail; and by corrupt Prieſts, Things are often taught under the Name of Chriſtianity, which are oppoſite to the Nature of Chriſtianity: Religion is pretended, and Power meant. In conſequence of this, Duty is converted into Sin, and Sin into Duty. Thus, the worſhipping of God according to one's Conſcience, without which there can be no Worſhip, is made by the High Church Prieſts a damnable Sin; and the not worſhipping a Table in the Chancel, tho' in Oppoſition to one's Conſcience, is as bad. Sometimes the *reſiſting* of *unlawful Power*, is certain Damnation; and ſometimes the *not rebelling* a-

gainſt

gainſt the moſt lawful Power, has the ſame terrible Penalty annexed to it. To doubt or deny their uncharitable, unintelligible Explications of Myſtery, which cannot be explained, is the moſt heinous Atheiſm; and to whip a ſeditious, forſworn Prieſt, is crying Infidelity, and a Wound to Chriſt, through the Sides of his Ambaſſador.

At one time, *Predeſtination* is of high Conſequence, and *made* an *Article of Faith*, and all *Free-Willers* ſhou'd be baniſhed the Land, or locked up in Dungeons, like wild Beaſts; which was the Judgment of the Biſhops in King *James* the Firſt's Days, concerning the *Arminians*. At a different Seaſon, when Preferments run high on t'other ſide, as in King *Charles* the Firſt's Reign, and ever ſince; *Arminianiſm* not only recovers Credit, but grows modiſh, and conſequently *Orthodox*; while *Predeſtination* becomes an old faſhioned Piece of Faith, and a ſure Sign of *Fanaticiſm*; and yet it continues one of the 39 Articles, and yet it muſt not be believed, and it muſt be ſigned and aſſented to with a ſincere Aſſent.

In all theſe Marches and Counter-marches, the Paſſions of too many of the People keep Place with thoſe of the High Prieſts; and they are conſtantly diſpoſed to be Slaves or Rebels, Free-Willers, or no Willers, Believers of this, or Believers of that, juſt as Almighty High Church commands them.

Such Men do not pretend to teach their People the Meekneſs of Chriſtianity:—No, their

their Zeal is to be Anger, and their Religion Cruelty. That Fierceneſs, which is inconſiſtent with the Spirit of a Chriſtian, is to be the certain Criterion of one whom they call a *true Churchman*; and that Mercy, which is inſeperable from the Goſpel, is inconſiſtent with the Temper of High Church. Their Votaries are not taught to be *Chriſtians*, which wou'd ſpoil the Project, but *High Churchmen*; and inſtead of an Army of Martyrs, they are to be an Army of Martyr-makers: Nor is any Portion of Knowledge fit for them; for That might endanger the Loſs of their Vaſſalage; and the teaching them to know for themſelves, might extinguiſh their Zeal, and entirely change their Belief and Behaviour. The poor People are, in ſhort, by ſuch Guides taught to be ignorant, and to let others know for them: They muſt give up common Senſe, to learn their Duty; and abandon Chriſtianity, without which they cannot have the Grace of God, to embrace rigid Conformity, which is neither a Sign, nor a Cauſe of that Grace, but often a Bar and a Contradiction to it. This is ſo true, that whoever can reconcile *Human Authority* to *Chriſtian Charity*, may reconcile Water and Fire, or do any other Impoſſibility.

Tenderneſs and Moderation to thoſe who devoutly differ from us, though they are evident Principles and Duties of Chriſtianity, and even the Reſult of Reaſon, Juſtice, and Hu-

Humanity, yet are never mentioned by the Mouth of Orthodoxy, but as Terms of Contempt or Reproach: Inſomuch, that a pious Indulgence to Men of a different Communion, the moſt honeſt, virtuous, inoffenſive Men, and an Indulgence for the invincible, and perhaps rational Perſwaſions of the Mind, is the common Butt of Satire, and either ridiculed or reviled; whilſt Men of the ſame Side may go what Lengths they will in Violence and Villany, without Anger or Rebuke: And while one Man ſhall have his Houſe burned, his Brains beat out, and his Family ruined, for having a ſcrupulous Conſcience, which is much more offenſive than none at all; another Man ſhall break all the Ten Commandments with Reputation.

Hatred and Bitterneſs of Spirit, are the firſt Leſſons which the unhappy People are taught by ſuch Men; and the Goſpel muſt be laid aſide, and good Nature be extinguiſh'd, before modern Orthodoxy can be ſwallowed, or modern Zeal infuſed. Some of them may probably have learned to repeat the *Catechiſm* by Rote, and even to have practis'd profound Reſpect and Submiſſion to their *Spiritual Superiors*; but for the great and indiſpenſable Duties of Religion, how can it be expected they ſhould mind them, while they daily ſee their Teachers expreſs a much more warm Concern for their own Dignities and Revenues, than for the Honour and Intereſt of pure unmix'd Religion, which was ever

ever higheſt when Eccleſiaſtical Power and Eccleſiaſtical Exciſe were loweſt.

When a Congregation ſees the Doctor much warmer againſt Diſſenters, than againſt Sin, and not half ſo zealous for the abſolute Neceſſity of a virtuous and ſober Life, as for the abſolute Neceſſity of a rigid Conformity; what can they conclude, but either that he banters them, or that a ſtupid Compliance with him, and a raging Reſentment againſt Nonconformiſts, are the great Duties of Churchmen? Add to this, that if his Life be vicious, ſuch a Concluſion is ſtill the more natural to vulgar Underſtandings. When they ſee Church Power ſo violently contended for, and Goſpel Holineſs ſo little regarded, or ſo eaſily diſpenſed with; what can their ſtupid Underſtandings infer, but that a blind Submiſſion to the Eccleſiaſticks, is beyond all Evangelical Grace, and every Moral Virtue? They find by daily Experience, that they may commit Drunkenneſs or Whoredom, with Impunity, or a ſmall Expence; but if they do not give the Doctor what he calls his Due, even to the laſt Sheaf of Corn, or the laſt Pound of Wooll, they are expos'd in the Pulpit, harraſſed in the Biſhops Court, and probably, at laſt, ſurrendered to Satan and Damnation.

Beſides, they oftner hear Texts quoted, in ſome Pulpits, to abuſe Separatiſts, than to recommend Godlineſs and Virtue; and ſee the Mode of performing a Duty more ve-

hemently urged, than the Duty it ſelf: Thus kneeling at the Lord's Supper, is made by many of equal Importance with the Sacrament it ſelf; and the Croſs in Baptiſm muſt no more be parted with, than the Ordinance of Baptiſm.

It is therefore no wonder that the Affections and Antipathies of the common People, have neither proper Cauſes nor proper Objects, and that they neither love the Goſpel as ſuch, nor hate Sin as ſuch; but form their Faith and Devotion upon the Word and Behaviour of their Prieſts, who have the keeping of their Religion, their Zeal, and their Paſſions; and what hopeful Uſe they make of this terrible Dominion, we all know: For indeed the Chriſtian Religion is not ſo much as known to the High Church Vulgar, nor ſuffered to be known; and as little do they feel, or are ſuffered to feel, the tender Impulſes of good Nature and Humanity, but poſſeſs an Implacableneſs of Spirit, as oppoſite to the Spirit of *Chriſt*, as was the Spirit of *Mahomet* to that of *Moſes*.

Number XXXIV.

Wedneſday, September 7. 1720.

Of Fasting.

IN my 27th Paper, I have made a Diſſertation upon *Faſting*; in this I ſhall continue it.

Monſieur *de Fontenelle*, in his *Hiſtory of Oracles*, tells us from *Philoſtratus*, that the Oracle of *Amphiaraus* in *Attica*, deliver'd its Anſwers in Dreams; and that thoſe who conſulted it, muſt firſt faſt well, in order to dream well: But when Faſting failed to produce a Phrenzy of Brain, and by it the Meaning of the God, who had no other Way of aſcending into the Head, but upon the Fumes ariſing from empty Bowels; then the Prieſt helped his Maſter to bring forth a Dream, by wrapping up the devout Queriſt in the Skins of Victims, which being rubb'd and impregnated with intoxicating Drugs, diſpoſed him to dream moſt divinely,

and fill'd his Noddle with very hopeful Prophecy. This ſatisfy'd the believing Queriſt, ſaved the Credit of the God, and brought pretty Offerings to his *Vicar*.

Such uſe did the *Pagan* Prieſts make of the Duty of Faſting; and that the *Romiſh* Prieſts have perverted it to as wicked and deceitful Purpoſes, I have ſhewn in another Paper. It is agreeable to their Cunning and their Avarice, to make the People poor and mad; and it muſt be own'd a pretty prieſtly Art, that of driving Men out of their Eſtates and their Underſtandings with their own Conſent; and leading them into a Belief, that Starving is a Duty, and Lunacy is Grace.

By the Law of Nature, we are not obliged to faſt at all, unleſs in the Way of Phyſick, when we are ill, thro' an Overfulneſs of the Veſſels, or any other Diſorder, which may be removed or leſſened by Abſtinence. In this Caſe, we ought to faſt for our Health ſake; and whatever is neceſſary for Self-Relief, or Self-Preſervation, becomes alſo a Duty, and a piece of Natural Religion, when it does not contradict a poſitive Law of God. But to abſtain, upon certain Days, from the comfortable Uſe of God's good Creatures, which ought to be received with Thankfulneſs, out of a vain Pretence to pleaſe him, or to promote our own Salvation, is a ſtrange and barbarous Chimera, which the Law of Nature abhors; and can be the Effect of nothing

thing but Diſtraction in the People, or Craft in the Prieſts. We might as rationally imagine, that going naked at certain ſevere Seaſons of the Year, would draw us nearer Heaven; and that the afflicting our Skins with Froſt and Snow, would do great Service to our ſhivering Souls; and that tho' Self-Preſervation be an eſſential Law of Nature, yet Self-Deſtruction is alſo an eſſential Law of Nature.

Faſting, therefore, being no Part of the Law of Nature, the *Jewiſh* Law of Ceremonies, which is aboliſhed, cannot make it a Duty: And for the Examples of Faſting, taken from the Prophet *Daniel*, and other Holy Men of the Old Teſtament; they were either voluntary, ſuch as any one may perform when he is in a faſting Humour, which no Body pretends to reſtrain; or they were the Effect of Sorrow, when Grief had deſtroyed Appetite, and then there was no Devotion in them; or they were extraordinary and ſupernatural, and being inimitable, cannot be neceſſary. Miraculous Faſting cannot be a Duty, where the Gift of Miracles is not given.

As to the New Teſtament, there is not a ſtated Faſt appointed in it: We are indeed commanded to faſt and pray; but we are no where told how much, or how often, we are to do either; but are left to chooſe proper Occaſions, and proper Inclinations, for doing both. St. *Paul* is ſuch a generous Advo-

cate for Liberty of this Kind, that he condemns all thoſe who condemn others for taking it. *Let not*, ſays he, *him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not: And let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. One Man eſteemeth one Day above another: Another eſteemeth every Day alike. Let every Man be fully perſwaded in his own Mind.* (Rom. Ch. xiv. v. 3. and 5.) The ſame Spirit of Charity, and the ſame good-natur'd rational Advice, runs thro' the whole Chapter.

The Inſtitution of *Lent* was founded upon our Saviour's Faſt of Forty Days in the Wilderneſs; as if weak impotent Mortals could imitate the Omnipotent Son of God, in Works done but by divine Power! They might as well pretend to walk upon the Sea once a Year, or to raiſe the Dead at all Times: Beſides, our Saviour perform'd this Faſt but once, and his Apoſtles never, as far as we know. *Once a Twelve-month you muſt keep Lent*, is not a Goſpel Precept.

No Society, therefore, of Men can enjoyn any Time, or Meaſure, of Faſting (except where the Law directs the ſame) without departing from the Goſpel, and contradicting St. *Paul*, and ſetting up their own Authority in Defiance of both the Goſpel and the Saint. Such an Injunction would be impracticable, and even cruel. To many Conſtitutions it might be dangerous, and even fatal; and to

all

all Men, it would render Life wretched and burthenſome. The good God has no where commanded frail Men to worſhip him with Pain and Sickneſs of Body, nor to haſten their own Death by the Means of their Devotion. This would be to repreſent him as delighting in human Miſery, and human Sacrifices; a ſort of Worſhip ſuitable to the terrible Spirit of *Moloch*, or any other *Demon*, but no wiſe acceptable to the God of Mercy, and *the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*.

The Popiſh Prieſts know well, that it is intirely impoſſible that all Men ſhould comply with this their Diſcipline of Hunger, and perhaps that very Impoſſibility is their beſt Reaſon for maintaining it. It is certain that from hence they draw vaſt Gain, by hiring out Diſpenſations for Eating on the Days of Faſting; and the Lucre they make by breaking the Canon, is an unanſwerable Argument for defending it. No Man is denied the Privilege of breaking *Lent*, who can pay for breaking it. He who cannot faſt at all, may, for a competent Fee, eat Fiſh, which is a more luxurious Diet than Fleſh; and he who cannot faſt upon Fiſh, may, for a more competent Fee, faſt upon a Belly-full of Roaſt-Beef; which, tho' a chaſter ſort of Food than Fiſh, is more ſtrictly forbidden by that Church.

Indeed, ſuch are the vaſt Fees ariſing to the Popiſh Church, from Licences for a Li-

berty to eat, when it is a Duty to faſt, that the whole Inſtitution of Faſting *there*, ſeems only a religious Roguery, deſign'd for ſtarving the People, to feed the Prieſts. For my ſelf, I think the Parſon has ſo little to do with this Matter, that I do not think any Direction ought to be taken about Faſting, but from our Conſtitution, or our Phyſician. If it be our Duty to faſt on certain Days, no Tribe of Prieſts can diſpenſe with the Pleaſure and the Laws of Almighty God; tho' it is a Task which (for Money) they never refuſe: And if it be not our Duty, it is inſolent and wicked in them to command what neither God nor Nature requires; and it is in us a Sin and a Folly to obey them. Even the Proteſtant Prieſts, long ſince the Reformation, have known how to make the right Uſe of this Power. I my ſelf have ſeen ſeveral formal Diſpenſations, ſigned by Archbiſhop *Sheldon*, under the Archi-Epiſcopal Seal, to Licence the eating of Fleſh in *Lent*; which Diſpenſations, I preſume, were not granted without Application and Fees.

Religion is a voluntary Thing; it can no more, be forced, than Reaſon, or Memory, or any Faculty of the Soul. To be devout againſt our Will, is an Abſurdity; and it is ridiculous in others to hope to make us ſo, in Spite of our ſelves. We have no Power over the Appetites of others, no more than over their Conſciences. Neither a Man's Mind, nor

his

his Palate, can be ſubject to the Juriſdiction of another; and whoever takes upon him to regulate one's Throat and Stomach, and direct one how much to ſwallow, may (with equal Reaſon) aſſume Dominion over the other Offices of Nature, and dictate how much one ought to diſcharge. If Faſting is good and pious, becauſe it afflicts and mortifies the Human Spirit and Frame; a Surfeit, or a Debauch, or a Kick on the Guts, or a broken Leg, muſt be good and pious, for the ſame Reaſon, if given or taken with the ſame View.

As Faſting ought to be left to every Man's Diſcretion, becauſe every Man is the beſt Judge of his Conſtitution and his Conſcience, ſo ought it to be exerciſed with exceeding Care and Caution; otherwiſe it would be apt to ſour our Tempers, or diſorder our Heads, and probably do both. Now, neither Ill-Nature, nor Enthuſiaſm, is any wiſe related to true Religion; far otherwiſe, they are the greateſt Enemies it has. A bitter Spirit, and a raving Brain, may be occaſioned or increaſed by Faſting; but Chriſtianity neither produces them, nor owns them. We may faſt our ſelves into Peeviſhneſs, and call it *Chriſtian Zeal*; and into the Vapours, and call the Wind in our Heads, *Inſpiration*: But, by all this, we only ſhew that we know nothing, at leaſt poſſeſs nothing, either of *Inſpiration* or *Zeal*.

But

But this ſame immoderate Faſting does not only render People whimſical and paſſionate, and has conſequently helped to give Birth to many ridiculous and uncharitable Principles of Divinity, which have infatuated and inflamed Mankind; but it alſo creates narrow Thoughts, and an abject Poorneſs of Spirit; and renders the Mind prone to Deluſion and Slavery. It is manifeſt, that a moderate Uſe of the Bleſſings and Enjoyments of Life, of which Eating and Drinking are not the leaſt, has a wonderful Tendency to create or improve a good and beneficent Diſpoſition of Heart; which, in my Opinion, is as abſolutely neceſſary to Devotion, as to good Neighbourhood. I can never think that Ill-Nature, or Baſeneſs of Mind, can be an acceptable Oblation to the Wiſe and Merciful God; or that Religion ſhou'd command what common Senſe forbids. I muſt own, I am always beſt pleas'd after a good Meal, and therefore beſt diſpos'd to love God and my Neighbour, which is the Sum of both Tables: I feel, at the ſame Juncture, the Love of Liberty, and the Spirit of *Whiggiſm*, ſtrongeſt in me. And if Eating and Drinking makes us thus bold for our Conſtitution, let us, we beſeech you, in the Name of publick Spirit, promote moderate Eating and Drinking.

It is a Principle in Politicks, that a Happy People will never bear a Tyrannical Prince: He muſt therefore make his Subjects

jects wretched, before he can make himself abſolute. And this Principle holds equally true, in the Buſineſs of *Church Dominion*: The Laity muſt be Fools, before they can think the Prieſts to be Oracles; and they muſt be Slaves, before they can think the Prieſts to be Lords. Here then is an unanſwerable Reaſon, taken from the ſtanding Rules of Eccleſiaſtical Polity, why the Lay Beaſts of the People, as Mr. *Leſley* kindly calls us, ſhould be always kept ſenſeleſs, always ſtarving. I would therefore entreat all my loving Countrymen, that, as they love their Liberty and the Proteſtant Religion, they would love their Victuals.

NUMBER XXXV.

Wedneſday, September 14. 1720.

Of REASON.

REASON is the only Guide given to Men in the State of Nature, to find out the Will of God, and the Means of Self-preſervation. The Senſes are its ſubordinate Inſtruments and Spies: They bring it Intelligence; and it forms a Judgment, and takes Meaſures, according to the Diſcoveries which they make. It compares Things one with another, and chooſes them, if they are good; or neglects them, if they are indifferent; or ſhuns them, if they are bad. It diſcovers a firſt Cauſe, the Maker, Contriver, and Preſerver of all Things; and therefore it teaches Submiſſion to his Will, Admiration of his Wiſdom and Power, and Thankfulneſs for his Goodneſs and Mercy. It diſtinguiſhes Subjects from Slaves;

Slaves; and ſhews the Lovelineſs of Liberty, and the Vileneſs of Vaſſalage: It ſhews that, as to political Privileges, all Men are born equal; and conſequently, that he who is no better than others, can have no Right to command others, who are as good as himſelf; unleſs for the Ends of their own Intereſt and Safety, they confer that Right upon him, during *their* good Pleaſure, or *his* good Behaviour.

REASON has invented all *Science*, pointed out all Commerce, and framed all Schemes for ſocial Happineſs. It has poliſhed Mankind, ſet the *Greeks* above the *Barbarians*, and the *Romans* above the *Greeks*. It has been obſerved, in Praiſe of its great Power and Excellency, by a celebrated Moraliſt, that *we have not ſufficient Strength to follow our Reaſon as far as it would carry us.*

To REASON we are beholden for all the Comforts and Conveniencies of Life, next after the firſt Author of them; and for our Defence againſt the Aſſaults of Beaſts of Prey, and of one another; and for our Shelter from the Inclemencies of uncertain Weather, freezing us, or ſcorching us, according to the different Seaſons of the Year. The Earth, with all its Abundance, affords but rude and unpleaſing Entertainment, without the Dexterity and Refinements of Reaſon. Thus, even the Gifts of *Nature*, before they arrive at us, and are made fit for our Uſe, become

become alſo the Gifts of REASON. Without REASON, we had lived like the *Brute Creation*, upon raw Fruit, taſteleſs Herbs, and the cold Spring; or expoſed to the mercileſs Jaws of Famine, when a ſevere Winter had frozen up the Stores of the Earth, and locked the Waters under Ice.

REASON checks tumultuous Paſſion, the greateſt Enemy to the Peace of the Mind, and to the Peace of Society. Hence it has been obſerved, by the ſame Moraliſt, that all our *rational* Purſuits are *temperate* Purſuits; and that what we purſue with REASON, we never purſue *with Violence*. REASON, ſubdues Anger, and prevents Cruelty; it makes a Man leſs fierce than a Lyon, and leſs ravenous than a Bear. It is not *human Shape*, but human Reaſon, that places a *Man* above the *Beaſts* of the Field, and lifts him into a Reſemblance with God himſelf. Hence it is juſtly ſtiled *Divinæ particula Auræ; A Ray, or Impulſe of the Divinity*. And, in what Senſe can a Man be ſaid to be *made after the Image of God*, unleſs by his poſſeſſing that REASON, which is a *divine Particle of the* GODHEAD; We *reſemble* not our MAKER in *Perſon* or *Complexion*; and therefore can only *reſemble* him in REASON, and in *Mercy*, which is the Child of this *Divine Reaſon*.

Were we not *rational Creatures*, we could not be *religious Creatures*, but upon a Level with *Brutes*, to whom God has made no Re-

Revelation of himſelf, becauſe they want Reaſon to diſcern it, and to thank him for it. *Revelation* therefore preſuppoſes *Reaſon*, and addreſſes it ſelf to *Reaſon*; and God himſelf, by perſwading us, as he does in his Word, by the Voice of *Reaſon*, appeals to our *Reaſon*. We cannot glorify God but with our Underſtandings; and we are convinced of his Goodneſs before we adore it. To praiſe him, without *Reaſon*, is a Contradiction, and an Impoſſibility. The Devotion which he requires, muſt be *free*, *rational* and *willing*; and where it is not ſo, it is *Folly* or *Hypocriſy*.

Nor is there any Oppoſition between *Reaſon* and *Grace*, whatever ſome may weakly, or diſhoneſtly, maintain. In Truth, *Grace* is never given, but where *Reaſon* was already given; and the former *cannot* ſubſiſt, where the latter *does not*. We may have worldly Wiſdom without Piety; but cannot poſſeſs Piety without Underſtanding; nor does Grace, tho' given in the greateſt Abundance, at all ſupply the ordinary Offices of Reaſon. We do not find that St. *Luke* was a better Phyſician, for having written a *Goſpel*; or St. *Paul* a better *Sailor*, or better *Tent-Maker*, for being an *Apoſtle*. But neither could St. *Luke* have been an *Evangeliſt*, nor St. *Paul* an *Apoſtle*, unleſs God had given them *Reaſon* as well as *Grace*. Indeed they are both the Gifts of God; only the One is *ordinary*, and the Other is *extraordinary*.

REASON, even without the Light of *Revelation*, teaches us to inveſtigate Nature, and praiſe God for the Wonderfulneſs of his Works. It muſt judge of Revelation it ſelf, what is ſo, and what not; and of the Words and Language, in which the Holy Oracles were at firſt convey'd; and of the Words and Language into which they were afterwards tranſlated. Now Words, many of them, being obſcure or equivocal, and ſignifying different Things to different Men, it is left to our Reaſon to determine, in what Senſe theſe Words are to be underſtood. The Spirit of God has invented for us no *New Ones*, or ſuch as carry in their Sound certain and determinate Ideas, which cannot be miſtaken, but muſt *infallibly* be the ſame to every Man.

By the *Light* of REASON we ſee about us. It warns us againſt Craft, and arms us againſt Force; and the ſame *Reaſon*, which commands us to believe in God *implicitly*, and obey him *paſſively*, does alſo command us to truſt to no Man without Inquiry, and to ſubmit to no Man without Cauſe. Thus, what is our Duty in Relation to God, would be Madneſs in Relation to one another: The good *GOD* cannot deceive us; but MEN have Pride, Folly, Intereſt and Complexion, all conſpiring to deceive themſelves and others.

Our firſt Attempt to make Converts, is an Appeal to their REASON, by which they are to judge *for themſelves* of the *Reaſonableneſs* of our Religion, and of the Argu-

ments

ments which we bring for the Defence and Recommendation of our Religion: Which Method would be exceeding abſurd and diſhoneſt, if we did not ſuffer them to judge of our Religion with the ſame Freedom, after they are come into it, as they did before they embraced it. This would be Trepanning one's Reaſon into Captivity, with its own Aſſiſtance; firſt to make *uſe* of it, and then to vote it uſeleſs: A ſtrange inconſiſtent Piece of Treachery, and a flat Contradiction to that *Liberty with which CHRIST has made us free!* As if we were to receive any *Syſtem* upon the Grounds of our *Reaſon*, without which it never can be ſincerely receiv'd, and then to reject *our Reaſon* upon the Grounds of our *Syſtem!*

Pray, how do we diſtinguiſh the Beauty and Truth of the *Goſpel*, from the Impoſture and Abſurdity of the *Alcoran*, but by our *Reaſon?* How do we detect the impudent and ſenſeleſs Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, but by our *Senſe* and *Reaſon?* Why did we, or how could we, leave *Popery*, and embrace the *Reformation*, but becauſe our own *private Reaſon* told us; and *Scripture*, of which we made *our ſelves* the *Judges*, told us; that we left Slavery, Falſhood, and Cruelty, for Truth, Freedom and Innocence? How did our *Saviour* prove himſelf *the Son of God*, but by Miracles, which every Eye ſaw, and every Ear heard? He appealed to the *Senſe* and *Reaſon* of Mankind; and all

were convinced, that would be convinced. How do we know the Scripture to be the Word of God, but by the Deductions and Information of *Reaſon*? How can we prove our own Church, *as by Law eſtabliſhed*, to be the *pureſt* and *beſt conſtituted Church in the World*, but by the Teſtimony of impartial, *diſintereſted* REASON? For, it is plain, from the great Number of *Gain ſayers*, and *Arians*, that her *genuine Sons* have not the miraculous Gift of inſpiring, *from above*, all Men with their own *Orthodox* Sentiments. How can we diſtinguiſh Religion from Enthuſiaſm; Grace from Superſtition; Faith from Credulity; the Love of the Church from the Love of Power; and the Authority of God from the Impoſitions of Men; but by *Reaſon*, or by the *Scripture*, interpreted by *Reaſon*?

In ſhort, all who are Friends to TRUTH, are Friends to REASON, the Diſcoverer and Champion of TRUTH; and none are Foes to *Reaſon*, but thoſe who have *Truth* and *Reaſon* for their Foes. He, who has dark Purpoſes to ſerve, muſt uſe dark Means: Light would diſcover him, and Reaſon expoſe him: He muſt endeavour to ſhut out both; and make them look frightful, by giving them ill Names; for farther than Names the Vulgar inquire not.

From this Cauſe, Religion and Liberty flouriſh, where *Reaſon* and Knowledge are encouraged; and where-ever the latter are

ſtifled,

ſtifled, the former are extinguiſhed. In *Turkey*, Printing is forbid, *Enquiry* is dangerous, and *Free-ſpeaking* is CAPITAL; becauſe they are all inconſiſtent with the *MAHOMETANISM by Law eſtabliſhed.* Hence it comes to paſs, that the wretched *Turks* are all ſtupidly ignorant, are all Slaves, all Infidels. Nor have the *Papiſts* much Advantage to boaſt above the *Mahometans.* Their Guides and Governors lock up from them the Scripture, which is the Book of Knowledge: They teach them, that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion:* They baniſh Liberty, they brow-beat *Reaſon*, they perſecute Truth. In Conſequence of all which, the deluded Votaries of the *Romiſh Church* are as ignorant as the *Mahometans*, as great Slaves, greater Idolaters, and greater Perſecutors; that is, they exceed the *Turks* in their Barbarity, who exceed moſt others.

Here, in *England*, why are we *free*, why *Proteſtants*; but becauſe we are guided by *Reaſon*, and judge for our ſelves? And none amongſt us complain of the *Liberty of the Preſs*, or the *Growth of Free-Thinking*, but thoſe who would found a Dominion upon *Stupidity* and Perſecution. Vile and woeful is that Cauſe, which muſt be ſupported by Ignorance and Miſery! And yet there are thoſe in *Great-Britain*, who, tho' they wear a holy and venerable Livery, yet have the Boldneſs and Blaſphemy to chriſten that *impious Cauſe*, the *Cauſe of God* and *of his Church.*

To conclude; *Scripture* and *Reaſon*, without which Scripture can have no Effect, are the only Teſts of every Falſhood and Impoſture, and every Superſtition. Suppoſe, for Example, a Reverend Doctor is touched with an odd Zeal for *Bowing* to the *Eaſt*; he ought to convince my *Reaſon* that *Bowing* to the *Eaſt* is enjoined in Scripture, before he enjoins me to bow alſo. If he ſays, it is enjoined by the Authority of the Church; he then muſt ſatisfy my Reaſon, that the Scripture teaches the Church to teach her Members to make Bows. If he anſwers, that neither does the Scripture teach to bow to the *Eaſt*, but that the *Church* thinks *Bowing* decent and edifying; he muſt then prove, by rational Evidence, that what every Church thinks decent is a Duty. If he replies, that this is only true of the one Orthodox Church; then he muſt prove that his Church is the ſole Orthodox Church, according to the Rules of the Goſpel. And if the Doctor cannot do this to my Satisfaction, then there will be an End of his Argument for his Eccleſiaſtical *Bowings*.

As we muſt judge from Scripture what is Orthodoxy; ſo we muſt judge from Reaſon, what is Scripture.

NUMBER XXXVI.

Wednesday, September 21. 1720.

Of the Peace *of the* Church.

IT is a ſhameful Inſult upon our Underſtandings, that of ſanctifying the moſt wicked Purpoſes, and moſt cruel Actions, with the moſt honeſt and innocent Names; and yet nothing is more frequently practiſed. Thus the worthy Name of RULER ſhall be proſtituted and pronounced aloud, to palliate and even to juſtify the Barbarities of a TYRANT; and that peaceable Word *Obedience* ſhall be forced to ſignify an unmanly and unnatural Patience of *Servitude*. LAWS, which were intended to protect and encourage good Men, and to reſtrain and puniſh ill ones, are often perverted into deadly Inſtruments in the Hands of Robbers and Uſurpers, againſt the Virtuous and the Harmleſs; and the Means of Preſervation are turn'd into Engines of De-

ſtruction. The *Lord's Anointed*, which at firſt was only a Man approved and choſen by God himſelf to be the Ruler of his People, has been ſince compelled to mean an over-grown Plunderer, who *choſe himſelf* to be a Deſtroyer of God's People.

Theſe are ſome Inſtances of the Abuſe of Words in *Civil Life*. In Religion, the Abuſe has been, if poſſible, ſtill greater; of which I have given already many Proofs, and ſhall continue to give more in the Courſe of theſe Papers. I ſhall at preſent confine my ſelf to a Phraſe, which is indeed a very good one, but which I have never known applied to a good Purpoſe in my Time, nor at any Time before; I mean, that of *the Peace of the Church*.

By the *Peace of the Church*, when it is taken in a rational and warrantable Senſe, I take to be meant no more than this; namely, That any Number of People, who have agreed among themſelves upon Terms of religious Communion, ſhall quietly enjoy the ſacred Privilege of Meeting together to worſhip God; and whoever diſturbs them, let his Title or Pretenſions be what they will, is a Breaker of the Peace of the Church. Or if any other Society greater than the former, and of longer ſtanding, think fit to be provok'd at this religious Indulgence, and call it a Breach of the Peace of the Church, they bring home the Charge upon themſelves; who, by breaking the Peace of the Church, mean only the not ſubmitting to their own

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proud Spirit, which finds Peace only in the Exerciſe of ſucceſsful Tyranny. Or if the ſmaller Society ſhould uſurp Dominion over the Thoughts of its own Members, and demand of them a Belief contrary to the Light of their Minds, or a Behaviour contrary to the Dictates and Conviction of their Conſciences; they juſtify the Claims of the greater Society over themſelves, and leave themſelves without Excuſe for having left it.

A Man, who leaves the Communion of any particular Church, does no more break the Peace of that Church, than a Man who leaves the Realm, breaks the Peace of the Realm; or than a Man breaks the Peace of a Family, who, whilſt the reſt dine upon Fleſh, does himſelf dine ſeparately upon Fiſh. But he does evidently break the Peace of the Church, who would by Violence keep any one in that Church; foraſmuch as, by ſo doing, he violates Conſcience, which is the Seat and Centre of Religion, there being no Religion where there is no Conſcience, and conſequently no real Church. He who prays without Book, does not break the Peace of the Church; provided he forces no Body to pray as he prays: But he who would compel others to pray by his Pattern, againſt their own Liking, does not only break the Peace of the Church, but deſtroys, as far as he can, its very Eſſence; becauſe a Church is conſtituted by the *voluntary* Devotion performed by Two or Three met together in

Chriſt's Name. If it is not *voluntary*, it is no Devotion; God will be worſhipped *in Spirit and in Truth*: And if it is voluntary, no Man can controul it.

Hitherto, for the moſt part, *the Peace of the Church* has been unnaturally made to ſignify a blind Submiſſion to the Dictates of Prieſts in Matters of Devotion; and a blind Acceptance of all their Schemes, Dreams and Forgeries in Matters of Faith. Now here is no Church at all; but on one hand, the Invention and Impoſition of deceitful and tyrannical Men, defacing and miſrepreſenting Religion, and wreſting it to ſerve their own wicked Purpoſes; and, on the other hand, a Tribe of Fools and Slaves, ſacrificing their Senſes, their Freedom, and their Conſciences to Antichriſt, and worſhipping him, and not God. If one of theſe groveling Bigots reſumes his Eyes and breaks his Fetters, he, forſooth, is a *Schiſmatick*, he breaks the *Peace of the Church*.

Why will theſe Men, ſo famed for being cloſe and crafty, be ſo plainly ſhewing us, that by the Church they mean only Themſelves; and by the Worſhip of God, they mean only the Worſhip of their own Perſons and Authority? But they make this manifeſt, as by a Thouſand Inſtances, ſo particularly by this; namely, that the greateſt Rebel to God ſhall find good Quarter, provided he be but a good Subject to them; and the moſt conſcientious Servant of the Living God

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ſhall find no Mercy, if he diſputes to bend to their Uſurpations, and to ſwallow their Inventions for divine Oracles. It is no Matter, whether you live like a *Chriſtian* or no, provided you do not break *the Peace of the Church*; but if you do, your being a Saint will not atone for it, nor ſtand you in the leaſt ſtead.

If I do all I can to pleaſe God, I ſhall certainly pleaſe him. Now, if the Clergy had the ſame View and Deſign, my pleaſing God would alſo pleaſe them. In conſequence of this, if I thought my Abode and Communion with them a Sin, it is their Duty to encourage and exhort me to leave them, and to obey God rather than Men. But far from this, the Plea of pleaſing God is often no Way of pleaſing them; and they ſeldom fail to damn a Man for thoſe very Actions, by which, through Chriſt, he ſhall be ſaved; namely, deſerting Authority for Conſcience, and finding out the Truth for himſelf.

A ſtupid Servitude to unbounded Dominion, ſupports the Peace of the Church in ſome Countries, juſt as Ignorance, Poverty, and many Dragoons do the Peace of the State in others.

The breaking of the Peace of the Church, as the ſame is generally underſtood by the ignorant People, and always by the ambitious Clergy, is both a rational and a religious Duty, and the beſt Action a Man can perform. That Man muſt be as void of Rea-

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ſon as of Religion, who quarrels with me for having different Faculties from him, and a different Way of conceiving Things. He might with as much Propriety quarrel with me for having a different Complexion, and a different Palate, neither of which is in my own Power.

If I chriſten my Child without the *Sign of the Croſs*, or a *human Form of Words*; how do I, by this, break the *Peace of the Church* or of good Neighbourhood? But he, who oppreſſes or calumniates me for thus doing my Duty, by diſcharging my Conſcience, commits an Outrage both upon Humanity and Conſcience; and not only breaks the Peace of the Church and of Society, but by his Want of Charity declares his Want of Chriſtianity.

If I follow the beſt Light I can get, I do my Duty; and if I do my Duty, I pleaſe God. And who ſhall dare to tell me, that though I pleaſe God, yet I break the Peace of the Church? Would not this be to own, that the Will of God and the Will of the Church are oppoſite Things?

I do not believe, that there are upon Earth two Men who think exactly alike upon every Subject; and yet our different Taſtes in Meat, Drink, Building and Dreſs, make not the leaſt Difference in human Society; nor is it likely they ever will, unleſs we eſtabliſh by Law, and tack Preferments to One particular Mode of Eating, Drinking, Building and Dreſſing; then indeed we may ſoon

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expect to ſee the eſtabliſh'd and orthodox Maſon, Cook and Taylor, very zealous and loud for *Conformity* and *Penalties*. But at preſent, Ten Men in Ten different Suits can dine together upon Ten different Diſhes, and give Ten different Opinions upon one Piece of Painting or Architecture, without breaking Friendſhip or good Humour. If indeed they are drunk either with Wine or Zeal, they will be apt to fight about the *Church* or *ſomething elſe*: But why Men in their Senſes ſhould clamour and quarrel at their Neighbour's particular Conſcience, any more than at his particular Palate, no Reaſon can be aſſigned, but the Infatuations of Prieſtcraft operating upon its Brat Bigotry. Is not Conſcience dearer to a Man than his Palate or his Fancy in Cloaths? God can receive no Worſhip that comes not from the Conſcience; and he who commands you to follow him againſt your Conſcience, commands you in effect to provoke God out of Complaiſance to Man; and rather than do this, I hope it is lawful to break the Peace of the Church. Where the Church quadrates with a Man's Conſcience, he will of courſe comply with the Church; but where it does not, he is in Conſcience bound to deſert it; otherwiſe to be a Conformiſt, he muſt be a Hypocrite.

Can theſe Men be Chriſtians, who demand Submiſſion to their Dictates, in Oppoſition to the Dictates of Conſcience, and at the Peril of Salvation; and who, provided you obey them,

them, care not though you mock God? But if they will allow *every Man to be fully perſuaded in his own Mind*, which is the Apoſtle's Rule and Precept, then the Cry of breaking the *Peace of the Church*, is an empty knaviſh Cry.

Indifferent Things in Religion there are none; and therefore the pretended Power of the Eccleſiaſticks to impoſe them, is wicked and ridiculous. If they are indifferent in their own Eyes, why are they impoſed? And if they were indifferent in the Eyes of others, no Body would refuſe them. But, if I diſlike them, they are no longer indifferent to me; and if you lay any Streſs upon them, they are no longer indifferent to you. But to oppreſs, impriſon, and ruin People for Things *allowed to be indifferent*, is ſuch a Piece of Impudence, and wanton Cruelty, as cannot be deſcribed.

To call any Thing indifferent in Religion, is to own that it has nothing to do with Religion. Now, can any Reaſon be given why Religion ſhould be intereſted in that, in which Religion has no Intereſt. Sure theſe Men mock us, and would ſeem to be in Jeſt, did not their Proceedings, when they have Power, ſhew them to be terribly in Earneſt.

If I neglect a Ceremony, or a Cringe, which I think a Reproach to Religion and Reaſon; do I break *the Peace of the Church*, for thus doing Honour to Religion and Reaſon?

ſon? Or is it not rather an Inſult upon Both, and a manifeſt Breach of Charity, to uſe me ill for acting upon ſuch righteous and laudable Motives? Do I break *the Peace of the Church*, in worſhipping God after a Manner that I am verily perſuaded he will accept? Or, do I not rather diſhonour him, in uſing that as Worſhip which my Mind tells me is no Worſhip, tho' it ſhould be Eſtabliſhed by Law?

In *Popiſh* and *Mahometan* Countries, you ſee neither true Religion nor the Practice of it; and yet *the Peace of the Church* there is wonderfully well ſecured by great Armies and Capital Penalties. Fire and Sword, Halters and Dungeons, are all employed to protect *the Peace of the Church*. And in every Nation under the Sun, where the *Church* enjoys the moſt *profound Peace*, the People enjoy the moſt profound Miſery, Ignorance and Slavery. Civil and Religious Liberty are certain Signs of each other, and live and die together; but, I believe I may lay it down for a Maxim, that *in any Country where there is ne'er a Separatiſt from the Church, there is ne'er a Freeman in the State.* To which Maxim I may venture to add another, namely, that *in the Eccleſiaſtical Style, the* PEACE OF THE CHURCH *is but another Phraſe for the* POWER OF THE PRIESTS.

NUMBER XXXVII.

Wedneſday, September 28. 1720.

The Enmity *of the* High Clergy *to the* BIBLE.

WE can never ſufficiently admire and adore the infinite Goodneſs of God to Mankind, in giving him a perfect Rule or Law for his Direction and Conduct; and delivering it in Books and Scriptures, which are plain and eaſy in all Things neceſſary to be known to every one, who ſhall make a proper Uſe of his natural Faculties; and not weakly truſt a Pope, or ſome Body like a Pope, for their Interpretation, who will ever have ambitious or other worldly Purpoſes to ſerve, by impoſing falſe and wicked Meanings on thoſe ſacred Writings.

How ought we then to value our Bibles, daily to read them, and ſearch our ſelves for thoſe

thoſe Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge; and how jealous ſhould we be of truſting our Temporal and Eternal Happineſs to the Judgment and Conduct of others, who, for the moſt Part, from imbibed Prejudices or worſe Deſigns, repreſent the moſt ridiculous, chimerical, abſurd, contradictory and immoral Opinions, to be fundamental Articles of Chriſtianity!

Notwithſtanding, ſuch is the Power and crafty Malice of the Popiſh and popiſhly affected Clergy, that in moſt Countries they have either taken the Bible (even on the Pretence of Religion it ſelf) out of the Peoples Hands, or have made it uſeleſs there; and ſuch is the ſenſeleſs Stupidity of the gaping Herd, that they obſerve not the Injury done them, and not only ſuffer this worſt ſort of Robbery, Violence, and Injuſtice, but kiſs the Rod, and eſteem themſelves to be kindly and religiouſly dealt with.

In all Popiſh Countries, before the Reformation, the Bible was lock'd up in the learned Languages; which effectually hindered the People from being acquainted with that Holy Book; the Prieſt ſaying, and the poor ignorant Laity believing, *That it was Heretical, and the very Foundation of all Hereſy and Schiſm, for the People to read the Bible.* Indeed, after the Reformation, ſome Tranſlations were made of it into the vulgar Languages of particular Popiſh Countries; but were the People ever the better for it? No

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ſuch Matter, I can aſſure you; for no one was ſuffered to read thoſe Tranſlations without a ſpecial Licence, which was dangerous to ask for, and rendred a Man ſuſpected of heretical Pravity; and the Prieſt never granted it but to thoſe, who either would not or could not make any uſe of it; that is, to ſuch as he well knew were pre-engaged by ſtrong Prejudices, or ſtronger Intereſts, to favour the ſacerdotal Power, and who durſt not underſtand the Word of God differently from the Clergy, who called themſelves the Church.

But in other Popiſh Countries, and particularly in *Spain*, the Bible is not extant in the vulgar Tongue, and conſequently muſt be unknown altogether to the People, who are incapable of reading it even by Licence; which can ſcarcely be call'd a Privilege loſt, conſidering how few durſt ask, or can get Licences, who they are that can obtain them, and what Danger they would incur in making a right Uſe of them.

Eſpecial Care is taken to prevent the Importation of any Tranſlation of the Bible in theſe Countries; and no ſooner does any Ship of a Proteſtant Nation come to Anchor in any Popiſh Port, where the Inquiſition prevails, but ſhe is viſited and ſearch'd narrowly for heretical Books, and particularly for Bibles, by the Officers of that Court, which are immediately carried to the Inquiſition, and there burn'd.

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The brave old Marſhal *Schomberg*, when he was laſt at *Lisbon*, told a Friend of mine, with Tears in his Eyes, That having, when he came aſhore there, left a *Dutch* Bible (which had been his Grandfather's) upon the Table of his Cabin, it had been carried from the Cuſtom-Houſe to the Inquiſition; and that though he had ſent to the chief Inquiſitor, and had ſpoke to him himſelf for it, he had not been able to recover it.

Let us now approach nearer home, and ſee how Proteſtants are uſed in reſpect to reading the Bible. And in order to conſider this Matter, I ſhall premiſe Two Things. *Firſt*, That the End and Deſign of reading the Bible, is to find out the Will of God, or the Meaning God holds forth to us therein, that we may regulate our Belief, and form our Practice thereby. And, *Secondly*, I premiſe, That to ſuch reading the Bible, it is requiſite that we ſhould not be prejudiced by Education, in behalf of any Fancies; that we ſhould pay no Regard to the Authority of weak and fallible Men; that no Opinions ſhould be impoſed on us as Chriſtian Opinions; as for Example, Conſubſtantiation, Predeſtination, the peculiar Opinions of *Arius* or *Socinus*, and other Doctrines, pretended to be derived from the Word of God; and that no Man ſhould be hurt in his Body, Name or Goods, for underſtanding the Bible in that Senſe which he thinks to have been intended by God; but that we ſhould act,

and be permitted to act, in this Matter, as we do in understanding another Book: For if such Arts, and Crafts, and Force are used, to make Men understand the Bible in a *Lutheran*, *Presbyterian*, or *Socinian* Sense, as form Mens Minds so strongly to those Senses, that not a Man in the Countries, where any of those Opinions prevail, does, or dares differ from the Sentiments of the Publick, or hurts himself any way by so doing; that Man is not properly allowed to read the Bible, or to take his Religion from thence, but receives his Religion from his *Lutheran*, or *Presbyterian*, or *Socinian* Priest, and might as well take his Religion from a Popish Priest, without using any Bible at all. For what is the difference between taking a Popish Priest's Word for the Sense of the *Bible*, about the Infallibility and Authority of the Pope and the Church, or the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, (which Bible the Priest keeps solely in his own Hands,) and taking a Presbyter's Word, or being influenced by him, as to the Sense of the Bible, in respect to the Doctrines of the Divine Right of Presbyters and Predestination? (which Bible he does, for Form's sake, put into the Laymens Hand, but keeps the Sense in his own.) If there is any material Difference, it is in this, that the Popish Priest acts a fair, open and consistent part, in denying the Use of the Bible; and that the Presbyter does the same thing hypocritically; and that the Presbyterian

Layman makes a more ſhameful and contradictory Submiſſion to his Presbyter, than a Popiſh Layman does to his Prieſt.

When the Minds of the Youth, and their Paſſions, are thus engaged in behalf of certain human Compoſitions; when they are taught to reverence Men, who are hired and paid to maintain thoſe Compoſitions; are bred up to hate the Perſons of Men of other Perſwaſions, to abhor their Doctrines, and think it matter of juſt Diſgrace to change the Principles of their Education: And when all this is taught as the Dictates of the Holy Scriptures; muſt they not, under theſe Prejudices, read the Scriptures without underſtanding them? Is not that Impartiality, which is neceſſary towards finding out the true Senſe of a Book, intirely taken away? And is not a Partiality, which muſt lead Men to miſtake the Senſe of a Book, introduced?

But even this is nothing to what thoſe muſt go through, if they dare to underſtand the Bible differently from what is vulgarly underſtood in the Country where they live: They will be deemed *Hereticks*; which *is ſuppoſed to include every thing that is bad in it: It makes every thing appear odious and deformed; diſſolves all Friendſhips, and extinguiſhes all former kind Sentiments, however juſt and well deſerv'd. And from the time that a Man is deemed an Heretick, 'tis Charity to act againſt all Rules of Charity. And the more Men*

violate the Laws of God in dealing with him, 'tis in their Opinion, doing God greater Service. And beſides being thus put into a *Bear-Skin*, and made a Scare-Crow; what is called Hereſy, undoes Men in their Trades and Callings, ſubjects them to Eccleſiaſtical and Civil Proſecutions, and deprives them of all Preferments in the Church or State. Whereas a Perſon who underſtands the Bible, as he is led by the Noſe to underſtand it, which is for the moſt part falſly, has not only fair Quarter and Reputation, and all manner of Preferments in Church and State attending him; but may be as lewd as he pleaſes, provided he has a ſufficient Portion of Zeal for his Orthodoxy, or rather for the Orthodox Prieſt.

Is it not therefore a mere mock Show, to recommend to Men the reading of the Scriptures; if, when they read them, they muſt underſtand them juſt as their Maſter, the Prieſt, tells them, under the Penalties of all the foregoing Inconveniences, and the foregoing Rewards, which the Prieſt, by his Power and Influence, beſtows? Biſhop *Bramhall* tells us plainly, (and too many of our modern Divines agree with him) that *the promiſcuous Licence which Proteſtants give to all ſorts to read and interpret the Scripture, is more prejudicial, nay, pernicious, than the over-rigorous Reſtraint of the Romaniſts:* Which is Proteſtant Prieſtcraft with a witneſs! For, as Mr. *Chillingworth* moſt judiciouſly

ciouſly obſerves, *He that would uſurp an abſolute Lordſhip and Tyranny over any People, need not put himſelf to the Trouble and Difficulty of abrogating and diſannulling the Laws made to maintain the common Liberty*, or of locking them up in an unknown Tongue from the People; *for he may compaſs his own Deſign as well, if he can get the Power and Authority to interpret them as he pleaſes; if he can rule his People by his Laws, and his Laws by his Lawyers.* Nay, *the more expedite, and therefore the more likely way to be ſucceſsful, is to gain the Opinion and Eſteem of the publick and authoriz'd Interpreter of them:* For by *this means* he *preſſes* the Laws into his Service, *to advance his Deſigns;* and can, in Accommodation to the Opinion Men have of the Excellency of the Laws contained in the Scriptures, with a ſort of Grace, *put a Crown on their Head, and a Reed in their Hands, and bow before them, and cry,* Hail King of the *Jews*; *and pretend a great deal of Eſteem, Reſpect, and Reverence to them,* while he is in a more effectual manner miſleading the People about their Meaning, than if he deſtroy'd the Scriptures themſelves, or lock'd them up in an unknown Tongue from the People.

NUMBER XXXVIII.

Wednesday, October 5. 1720.

Of Penance *and* Religious Revellings.

I Have, in Two former Papers, conſidered the Nature, Uſe, and Conſequences of *Religious Faſtings*: I ſhall, in this, enquire a little into the Merits of *Penance*, and the Devotion of *Feſtivals*; a Couple of potent Engines in the Hands of Churchmen.

Joy and Sorrow proceeding, as they do, from certain Cauſes which neceſſarily produce them; the one troubles the Imagination, and the other delights it, whether we will or no. They are different Names given to different Operations of the Animal Spirits, which bring to God Almighty no voluntary Worſhip, and conſequently no Worſhip at all. The ſame Diſorder in the Blood or Nerves, which diſcovers it ſelf in Sighs and Groans, would, in

in a greater Degree, bring forth Rage and Convulſions, which are not the Symptoms of a Goſpel-Spirit, but rather the Marks of Spirits diſpoſſeſs'd, in the Goſpel. People under Trouble, or in the Spleen, are too apt to miſtake their bodily or mental Diſorders for the Workings of Divine Grace; as if the wiſe and mild Spirit of God delighted to play childiſh and miſchievous Pranks with weak and unhappy Men, by filling them with wild Freaks or cruel Agonies. I doubt there are few of theſe ſort of People, who can give a Reaſon why the great God ſhould be better pleaſed with a ſorrowful Heart, than an aking Head.

If God Almighty is pleaſed with our afflicting our ſelves, he muſt be pleaſed beſt when we afflict our ſelves moſt; and a greater Degree of Suffering muſt beget a greater Portion of his Favour: And conſequently, the cutting our ſelves with Knives, as did the *Prieſts* of BAAL, muſt be more acceptable to him, than the bare whipping our ſelves with Rods, as do the *Prieſts* of ROME, *&c.* By the ſame Rule, if the endangering of one's Life be well pleaſing to him, the deſtroying of one's Life muſt be more pleaſing to him; and Deſpair and Self-Murther are more grateful Inſtances of Duty and Devotion to the God of Mercy, than barely being afraid of him, and barely making our Lives miſerable. The pious Conſequence of all which muſt be, that the bleſſed and beneficent God, who

is the Giver of all Good, is the Author of all Evil and all Misery; and the Maker and Preserver of Mankind, who is the Father of Mercies, is also the Destroyer of Mankind, and the Father of Cruelties.

Nor is this Reasoning so strange, or these Conclusions so unnatural, as some may ignorantly imagine; since the Priests, who, for the godly Ends of Dominion and Gain, were the first Inventers of *Sacrifices* and *Penances*, have frequently proceeded so far in their inhuman and diabolical Craft, as to butcher Men to appease their Deity. And indeed, when once you had taken their Word for the divine Will, you renounced all Right and Pretence to judge for your self, or to dispute any Measure of Devotion which they had thought fit to prescribe. Thus, for Example, if the Priests told you, that their God graciously long'd for a Bonfire, and had, in his divine Goodness, appointed you to be the principal Faggot; as averse as your carnal Spirit might be to this great Honour, yet you could not decline it, without the terrible Imputation of Disobedience, or Apostacy, and probably of Atheism: For, having given the Priest the Property of your Body, your Thoughts and your Behaviour, you were become ALL the Priest's.

The Duty of *Penance* is, according to certain Churchmen, a very necessary Duty: But there is another Duty quite opposite to it, and yet very necessary also; and that is,

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the Buſineſs and Duty of *Feſtivals*. Theſe two may indeed ſeem Contradictions to each other, and to the Eye of unſanctify'd Reaſon are ſo; but where they are enjoined by *Church-Authority*, it is our Duty to think them orthodox and conſiſtent, and ſo to be merry or melancholly, and to weep or laugh, juſt as *Mother-Church* COMMANDS us, in defiance of our Conſtitutions and our Underſtandings. We are to mourn on *Good Friday*, becauſe on that Day our *Saviour* died; though, if he had not, we could not have been ſaved: And we are to take our Belly full of Meat and Mirth on *Eaſter-Sunday*, becauſe Chriſt roſe on that Day from the Dead; though it was impoſſible for him to have continued there.

PENANCE *is a ghoſtly Puniſhment impoſed by a Prieſt, or voluntarily ſuffered by a Penitent, for ſome Offence real or imagined.* Sometimes it conſiſts in Abſtinence from certain Meats, which, it ſeems, are not ſo much in Favour with Almighty God, as are others: A Piece of Cod, for Example, with rich Sauce, is leſs ſavoury in God's Sight, than a plain Piece of Beef and Cabbage, and a greater Atonement for Sin. Sometimes it is performed by Change of Apparel; and a dirty Hair-Cloth is more pious and meritorious, than a clean Holland Shirt. Sometimes it is perform'd by rambling to ſome Church, to ſtare at a *wooden Saint*, and kiſs an old Coffin. Sometimes this holy Severity reſts

reſts altogether upon your Pocket, and God's Wrath is fervently and ſucceſsfully bribed away by the prevailing Interceſſion of ſome potent *Pieces* to his Prieſt, who will infallibly perſuade him to overlook your Guilt, and be good Friends with you. Sometimes you are to ſcarify your Back-ſide for the Healing of your Soul, and reconcile your ſelf to Heaven by the Dint of Laſhing; which will ſometimes ſerve for *another Purpoſe*; and ſo a Scourge made of Broom, is made the Scourge of God. But, if drawing Blood on this Occaſion be ſo pious, becauſe ſo painful, I do not ſee why the Drawing of a Tooth would not do as well; or why the Omnipotent would not be as propitious to deſolate Gums, as to bliſter'd Loins?

So much for praiſing God by being Sorrowful; in which Caſe, Sickneſs and Pain are great Bleſſings. Now for the Method of pleaſing him, by being Joyful; in which Caſe, Feſtivity and Merriment are great Bleſſings too! So that, we ſee, the Almighty is highly pleas'd with both our Miſery and our Happineſs.

Worldly Bleſſings are, no doubt, the Gifts of God, and we ought to receive them with joyful Hands and grateful Hearts; and Religion, and Philoſophy too, teaches us to ſubmit to Afflictions and Calamities with Patience and Humility, and to conſider them either as Effects of our own Intemperance and Folly, as the neceſſary and inevitable Concomitants

comitants of human Nature, or the Strokes of Providence intended for our Correction and Amendment; nor do I deny but it may be ſometimes lawful and expedient too, mechanically to prepare our Minds with Diſpoſitions ſuitable to the Actions they are to produce.

Every one's Experience ſhews him, that his Mind and Body operate upon one another: Both are improved by Exerciſe and moderate Food, raiſed and exhilerated by Muſick or Diverſion, enervated with Sickneſs, oppreſs'd with Drunkenneſs and Gluttony, fatigued with Labour; and often all the noble Faculties of the former are quite deſtroyed and extinguiſhed by Diſtemper and Accidents.

It may be therefore not only lawful, but our Duty, by proper Food, agreeable Converſation, and due Exerciſe, to prepare and keep our ſelves in ſuch a Temperament, as may beſt qualify us for cool Reflections, and enable us in the beſt Manner to exert our Faculties; but from what Principle of Reaſon or Religion do we find, that we muſt work up our Paſſions beyond their natural Pitch, and endeavour to deſtroy the Serenity and Calm of our Minds, to do Homage to the Deity; who will accept no Service but what flows from a ſincere and upright Heart, elevated and raiſed by a due Contemplation of the divine Perfections, and the Benefits received from our great Creator, or humbled by the Conſiderations of human Infirmities; and

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not intoxicated with various Muſick, pompous Shews, delicious Banquets, or Bottles of Brandy; nor depreſſed or ſunk with Mortifications, Penances, Faſting, or unwholeſome Diet; all which have nothing to do with true Religion, though they have been always eſſential Parts of every falſe one.

Let us now ſee what ſort of Devotion theſe *Holy Days* produce.

Idleneſs is the Nurſe of Vice, and fills the Taverns and the Stews with many debauch'd Cuſtomers, who, had they any Thing elſe to do, or would do any Thing elſe, might live as chaſte and ſober as any of their Neighbours, that are ſo, becauſe they are well employ'd. The common People think of a *Holy Day* with no other View, than that they ſhall then have their Belly-full of Ale, and Rambling, and Idleneſs. Perhaps in the Morning, they hear a Sermon, which is often calculated to drive Peace and Religion out of their Souls, and to fill them with Bitterneſs and Rage againſt thoſe who provoke them, by being ſober Subjects, and conſcientious Chriſtians. Next comes a gluttonous Meal, and a Load of Liquor, which adds freſh Fewel to the orthodox Zeal they imbib'd in the Morning, and inſpires them to deface or demoliſh Places ſacred to God's Worſhip, and to affront and inſult every ſober Man, who has not been at the Brandy-ſhop, and will not pronounce *Hell* and *Damnation* according to the Word of Command. After all this Miſchief and Bravery, they

they have Recourſe to more Liquor, over which they ſwear and triumph upon their late *Orthodox Exploits.* Probably, at laſt they vomit up their Devotions in *Drury-lane*, and finiſh the *Holy Day* in a *Bawdy-Houſe.* Next Morning, the Sum of the Reckoning will be this; They have loſt a Day, and with it their Innocence: They have risked their Health and their Souls: They have provoked God; and in his Name, committed Outrages upon their Neighbours. Sweet Jeſus! Is this the Spirit of *thy* Church? Can theſe be *thy* Followers, or the Followers of *thy* Servants?

Upon the Whole; a Man may ply his Imagination with black and diſmal Ideas, till he has made his Heart as ſad and ſorrowful as he pleaſes: He may alſo, by playing with his Fancy, and by amuſing it with agreeable and humorous Images, render his Soul as merry as he pleaſes; and by theſe Means create either *Comedy* or *Tragedy* within himſelf: But neither is Wantonneſs of Spirit any Worſhip of God; nor is this Gloomineſs of Soul any Devotion to him. The *Mahometan Derviſes* and *Indian Brahmans* exceed us by far in Faſting and Auſterities: It is incredible what voluntary Torture and Plague they undergo in the Way of Religion. And as to godly Ranting and Roaring, the old *Pagan Bacchanals* were as mad and as drunk on *their Holy Days*, as we of the Eſtabliſh'd Church can be on *ours.*

Number XXXIX.

Wednesday, October 12. 1720.

Prieſts *afraid of* Ridicule.

RELIGION, as the Popiſh Prieſts have diſfigured it, is only a wicked and ambitious Scheme, contrived by them, to ſet themſelves above the People. This is ſo true, that whereever the Prieſts have the moſt Power, Religion has the leaſt. Being neither appointed by the Law of Nature, nor the Law of Chriſt, they are only Intruders into the Affairs of Religion; which is therefore under an Uſurpation, while it is under them. So that their Foundation being falſe, they are in moſt Countries reduced to ſupport it by falſe Facts, and deceitful Appearances. And as they are thus oblig'd to cover Fraud with Fraud, and ſupport one Violence by another, it is no wonder that we find it often ſo carefully hidden under Inventions, and deformed by

by Abſurdities; and all thoſe Inventions and Abſurdities defended by Cruelty and a ſtrong Hand.

This ſtrange Jumble of Fictions they have the Front to call by the Holy Name of *Religion*, and gravely to create Faith out of Lies: And with the groveling Multitude, whoſe Eyes are in the Earth, all this paſſes off well enough; They have fearful Hearts and ſimple Heads, and ſo ſtand always prepar'd to be frighten'd or deluded at the prieſtly Word of Command. But becauſe the Craft lies ſubject to daily Detection from rational and diſcerning Men, its Champions have rais'd loud Cries and ſtrong Prejudices againſt the Two principal Weapons, by which their Cauſe is moſt annoy'd; I mean the Weapons of REASON and RIDICULE; the former of which diſcovers Truth, and the latter expoſes Fraud.

What civil Treatment theſe Reverend *Seers* afford to *Reaſon*, I have ſhewn elſe-where; and ſhall handle in this Paper, the Buſineſs of *Ridicule*, which they always repreſent as impious and profane, whenever it meddles with the Caſſock; and yet always exerciſe it according to their Talents, without Mercy, when the waggiſh grave Creatures are pleaſed to be Arch upon *Diſſenters* or *Free-Thinkers*.

To them is no doubt owing, that frequent but falſe Saying, now in the Mouth of every *Ignorant*; namely, that *it is an eaſy Mat-*

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ter to make a Jeſt upon Religion or the Prieſthood; which, whether they are aware of it or not, is ſaying that their Religion and its Prieſts are a Jeſt. For he, upon whom the Jeſt is made, does, in Effect, make the Jeſt; otherwiſe it is none. Religion and Virtue cannot be ridicul'd; and whoever attempts it, by ſhewing himſelf a Villain, raiſes Horror inſtead of Laughter, which is the End of Ridicule. But the vending of Grimace for Religion, and ſetting up for Piety without Virtue, are the natural Subjects of Jeer and Merriment.

Whoever fears Ridicule, deſerves Ridicule. He is conſcious of a weak Side, and knows he cannot ſtand a Laugh. This is the Caſe of ſacred Grimace, or *Gravity*, which Men of Senſe ſee to be only a ſtudied Reſtraint laid upon the Muſcles of the Face, and the Joints of the Body, and teaching them to move, not by the Impulſes of Nature, and the Motions of the Heart, but by Deſign, either to attract Admiration, or obtain Credit, or gain Followers. And therefore ſacred Grimace dreads Men of Senſe. However, it is never to be ſet aſide; for this ſame affected Demureneſs, ridiculous as it is in it ſelf, is a ſolemn Bait to catch the Mobb, whoſe Reſpect always follows their Wonder. The Vulgar are caught, like Woodcocks, by the Eyes, and led, like Calves, by the Ears; Shew and Sound lead their fat Heads Captive. It is therefore no

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Wonder, that in Popiſh Countries, a ſhewy Chancel, a curious tall Steeple, gilded Organs, and a delicate Ring of Bells, keep the *Many* on the Parſon's ſide, and make them all good Churchmen; and always get the better of a plain Religion, that has its Abode only in the Heart, and wants all the above-mention'd Marks of the true Church. Beſides all this, there are more Mirth and Holy Days in their Orthodox Faith, than in the contrary Scheme, which obliges Men to earn Heaven with the Sweat of their Brows, and take Pains to be ſaved.

Theſe, however, are but ſmall Inſtances of *Ridicule*, taken from the Force and Grimace of an external Religion. I ſhall here give Inſtances much more conſiderable, as well as much more ridiculous. Do we not ſee the pretended Succeſſors of the Apoſtles, at home and elſewhere, inſtead of making *Tents*, or converting the World, living voluptuouſly, and promoting the Exciſe? Do we not frequently ſee the Ambaſſadors of God, ſent to promote Virtue and Peace, and the Obſervance of his Laws, promoting Strife, frequenting debauch'd Houſes, rooking after Wealth, and plaguing and reviling their Neighbours? Do we not ſee holy Men, who have the Call of the Spirit, rioting in all the Works of the Fleſh? Do they not buy Livings with Money, and then claim them by divine Right? Do they not chop and jockey away poor Pariſhes for ſuch as are richer,

and yet pretend to have upon their Hands the Cure of Souls; tho', by ſuch vile Bargaining, they ſhew that they value as little thoſe Souls they have juſt bought, as they do thoſe they have lately ſold? Do not many of them, tho' they are void of all Merit, yet demand great Reſpect; and tho' ignorant, pretend to teach, and to reveal God's Will, which is already reveal'd, and yet live as tho' there was no God? And do they not, without obeying God, ſet up to command Men? Do they not ſeek Honour from their Cloth, which yet they diſhonour? And do they not, for the blackeſt Crimes, claim Sanctuary from the Church, which Church is the People, which People they abuſe and deceive? Do they not pretend to mend others, without being better than others, but in Truth more idle and proud than all others; two Qualities neither ſuited to the Welfare of Religion nor of human Society? Do they not flatter and ſupport the worſt of Tyrants; plague and diſtreſs, and often deſtroy the beſt of Kings; and in both Caſes, do they not bely the Holy Ghoſt, and pervert his Meaning? Do they not pretend to be appointed for the Good of Mankind, and yet always make Mankind, where-ever they have Power, thoroughly miſerable, baſe, poor, ignorant, and wicked? And finally, do they not invent vile Lies for vile Ends, and then blaſphemouſly make God Almighty to father them?

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Here is ſuch a motly Mixture of oppoſite Principles and Practices, as will always render thoſe, who are chargeable with them, the Contempt or Abhorrence of all Men who have Eyes and Underſtanding. Jeſt and Scorn will ſubſiſt as long as their Cauſes ſubſiſt; and Clergymen, of all others, will be moſt expos'd to them, while they continue to deſerve them; becauſe more Modeſty, Truth and Conſiſtency may be expected from them than any others. It is but a Piece of Juſtice due to Religion, to ridicule thoſe, who, as far as they can, ridicule Religion, tho' they ſet up for its Defenders. Ridicule, when it has no longer Matter to feed on, will die of it ſelf; and the Clergy, to avoid it, have no more to do, but not to deſerve it: But to go on complaining, without amending, is to nouriſh Raillery and Satire, by their own Actions. But as the Reforming themſelves is a Practice ſeldom known among High-Churchmen; Clamour, Lies and Oppreſſion are the conſtant Remedies they apply to the great Grievances of Wit and Ridicule, as often as they meddle, or ſeem to meddle, with the Cloth. This will abundantly appear from the following Inſtance, which will alſo ſhew the wonderful Vigilance and Jealouſy of Churchmen, in Behalf of the Trade.

Moliere having, in his Plays, brought upon the Stage Characters from the higheſt Quality and Profeſſions in *France*, without offending either; drew, in his *Tartuffe*, an

excellent and ſtrong Picture of a Hypocrite, who, tho' carefully diſtinguiſhed from a Man *ſincerely* religious, yet happen'd to reſemble the *Churchmen* ſo much, that they raiſed a terrible Outcry againſt the Play; and, according to their laudable Cuſtom, lugg'd Heaven, Head and Shoulders, into their Quarel. *Tartuffe* was, it ſeems, their Repreſentative General, and in ridiculing his godly Grimaces and ſtoical Devotion, *Moliere*, they ſaid, ridiculed them. In fine, by expoſing the concealed Villain and Debauchee, the whole Poſſe of the Prieſts thought themſelves expos'd.

Zealous therefore for the Dignity of the Caſſock, and juſtly apprehending that a Contempt upon Hypocriſy would bring a Contempt upon the *Order*, they applied to the Court; I ſay to the *Court*, where, by a religious Subſerviency to the Ambition, Luſt, and all the Rogueries of the Great, this ſort of Creature always finds Friendſhip and Countenance. That arbitrary and debauched Court could refuſe the Prieſts nothing; and the Play was forbid. Thus the *Tartuffes* of the Church, redeem'd from Scorn the *Tartuffe* of the Stage: The *Picture* was ſecur'd from being ſhewn, by the Number, Clamour, and Intereſt of the *Originals*.

Not content to rail with all due Clerical Bitterneſs againſt this Comedy, and curſe the ingenious Author by Word of Mouth; they detach'd one from their Body to curſe him

him in Print. This Chriſtian Author, without ever having ſeen the Play, pronounced it diabolical: He affirmed, that *Moliere* had a Devil, that he was a Devil Incarnate, a Devil in Man's Shape, a Libertine, an Atheiſt, and one who ought to be *burn'd* in this World, as he would aſſuredly be *damn'd* in the next. For the Vengeance of theſe Meſſengers of Peace never ſtops at the Death of their Victim; nor will they allow their Maker to have more Mercy than themſelves.

To ſhew how juſtly theſe holy Perſons were alarm'd on this Occaſion, I ſhall here give a Sketch of *Tartuffe*'s Character, as drawn in that Play. He is a Fellow, which from his godly Out-ſide and great Poverty is taken by an honeſt Gentleman, credulous and devout, into his Family, and permitted to govern it. He is a great Glutton, and a great Pretender to Faſting; a great Deſpiſer of Money, but rooks all he can from his deluded Patron. He will not ſpeak to my Lady's Maid till he has covered her Bubbies with his Handkerchief, ſo afraid is the Saint of Temptation; but at the ſame Time he tempts my Lady her ſelf to Adultery, and endeavours to debauch his Benefactor's Wife, with Heaven in his Mouth. The Gentleman's Son diſcovers to his Father theſe Solicitations of the Hypocrite, which he had overheard, and the Lady owns and confirms them; but neither of them is believed: The poor bewitch'd Man cries, *You are all Enemies to the*

godly Tartuffe; and tells him that to make him Amends, he will give him his Daughter, and ſettle his Houſe and Eſtate upon him. *The Will of the Lord be done*, ſays the Hypocrite. Accordingly, by an inſtant Deed, to the apparent Ruin of his Family, he makes this godly Villain Heir of all he has, with a Right of preſent Poſſeſſion. The Lady, not knowing what was done, does, by putting her Husband under a Table, make him a Witneſs of the Holy Lecher's Deſigns and Importunity. He is by this convinced; but when aſham'd of himſelf, and enrag'd at the Ingrate, he bids him get out of his Houſe; *No, Sir*, ſays *Tartuffe*, *It is you Turn to get out; the Houſe is mine, and you ſhall know it; I will be reveng'd of you, on Behalf of Heaven, which you would wound thro' my Sides.* Behold an Orthodox Pattern of the uſual Claim of *Divine Right* to the Wages of Villainy and Deluſion!

All this Behaviour, and theſe Speeches, were ſuch manifeſt Marks of the Church, that all its genuine Sons dreaded their coming upon the Theatre. Their Rogueries are all Sacred, and muſt not be ſet to View.

Moliere, to take away as much as was poſſible, all reaſonable Ground of Clamour from the Eccleſiaſticks, had not ſo much as ſuggeſted in the Play that *Tartuffe* was a Prieſt; and only called his Comedy, *The Impoſtor*, in general. Beſides all this, he had dreſs'd up his Rogue like a Man of the World.

World. He had not given him ſo much as a flapping Bever, but a ſmart ſecular Cock, with a Sword, a good Head of Hair, a Cravat, and a gaudy Coat. But all this Precaution of *Moliere*'s availed not; *Tartuffe* had the Conduct, Craft, and Spirit of a Prieſt, tho' diſguiſed like a Layman, and the Clergy found themſelves whip'd upon *Tartuffe*'s Back.

Eight Days after *Tartuffe* was forbid to be acted, the Court was entertained with a very irreligious Play, call'd *Scaramouch*. After it was over, the King told a certain *Prince*, that he wonder'd why thoſe People, who were ſo ſcandaliz'd at *Moliere*'s Comedy, did not ſay a Word of this! *O Sir*, anſwer'd the Prince, *The Reaſon is plain; The Play of* Scaramouch *only makes a Jeſt of God and Religion, in which theſe Gentlemen are no wiſe concern'd: But* Moliere *has dared to bring the Prieſts upon the Stage; which is not to be ſuffered.*

NUMBER XL.

Wednesday, October 19. 1720.

Of PRIESTLY CRUELTY.

A Good Man, is distinguish'd by his Humanity, as is the good God by his Mercy. Where there is no Humanity, there can be no Grace: We cannot possess at the same Time the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of a Brute or a Dæmon. Charity it self, the most sublime Christian Grace, seems to be only Humanity, guided and animated by Piety; And this is the more likely, for that it is the Business of the Christian Religion, to recover to human Nature those Virtues, which were either lost or lessen'd by the Fall of *Adam*. Had Man continu'd as he was made, perfect, a new Covenant and another Institution had been unnecessary.

Humanity then is an amiable Virtue, and the Characteristick of a Man; and of a Man

Man civiliz'd, gentle, benevolent; purged from all Rage, and every unſociable Paſſion.

But the Appetites and Paſſions of Men being too powerful for Reaſon, and the Law of Nature; Religion was inſtituted to regulate and quell them. For this End, it propoſes, as Sanctions and Reſtraints, the Favour of God to the Virtuous, and threatens his Diſpleaſure to the Wicked, in this Life; and, in the next, ſtill more adequate Rewards and Puniſhments, even thoſe of Heaven and Hell. This is the great Deſign of Religion; and it effectually anſwers the ſame, where its own honeſt and ſimple Dictates are obſerved and followed; than which Dictates nothing can be more plain and reaſonable; the principal Precept of the Goſpel, next after our Belief in *Jeſus Chriſt*, being that of Peace and Love: *A new Commandment*, ſays our Bleſſed Saviour, *I give unto you, that you love one another.*

In Conſequence of this Doctrine, and of the heavenly Temper which it inſpir'd, the firſt Chriſtians lived together in perfect Concord, Love and Charity; and yet there is no Queſtion to be made, but they differ'd from each other in their Conceptions about ſome Points in Religion; as we ſee the Apoſtles themſelves alſo differ'd on ſeveral Occaſions, and expreſs'd ſome Warmth in theſe their Differences.

This

This same Spirit of Charity and Love continu'd amongst the first Christians, till lying, crafty, and selfish Men, calling themselves Ministers, assuming to be Teachers, fill'd them with the Spirit of Discord, and instructed them to hate one another. They rent them into Parties, inspir'd them with the Bitterness of Faction, and taught them its Watch-words, by which they were to distinguish themselves from all other Christians: *I am of* Paul, *I of* Apollos, *and I of* Cephas, and the like Cant, full of Zeal, but void of Sense and Religion, had a direct and mischievous Tendency to abolish Faith in Christ, and to place it upon Men; and, in fine, to turn Christianity into Caballing. They likewise marked out all, who would not be driven nor deceived by them, with malicious and opprobrious Names, proper to expose them to Hatred and ill Usage. *Heretick*, *Apostate*, *Unbeliever*, *Schismatick*, and the like hard and equivocal Words, were found strangely effectual towards stirring up Rage, Revenge, and relentless War, against those unhappy People who were miscall'd by them; so effectual! that the same Sett of Men have never suffer'd the same Sett of Words to wax obsolete, but to this Day use them and cause them to be used, to the same impious and anti-christian Purpose, and (where the Law does not restrain their bloody Hands, and guard the Innocent) with the same Success.

When

When these ungodly and merciless *Ecclesiasticks* had thus, under the Cloak of Religion, craftily rais'd the blind Resentment and impious Zeal of their deluded Followers, against their Christian Brethren, who preferred the Spirit of the Gospel, and the honest Convictions of their Consciences, to the Pride and Commands of Men; there follow'd such amazing Instances of Cruelty, and such terrible Scenes of Blood, as must affect the Hearts and the Eyes of all who read them, or hear of them, if they possess either Christian Grace or natural Compassion. Christians were, by their Priests, set on to butcher Christians; and to make Havock of each other, in the Name of that Religion, which was distinguish'd from all other Religions, by a Spirit of Meekness, Mercy, and Love: And all this perhaps, for their different Manner of explaining a Mystery, which could not be explain'd; or which, if explain'd, ceas'd to be One.

This restless and unrelenting Rage, which Christians practis'd, at the Instigation of their Clergy, upon one another, for Thoughts and Opinions which they could not help, was a strong and a lasting Stumbling-block in the Way of the *Unconverted*; who could have but small Appetite for a Religion, which disown'd all Kindred to Peace and Humanity, and inspir'd its Votaries with such cruel Hatred, and such dreadful Fury: For, in short, that was the Religion they were to embrace;

embrace; a Religion no longer to be found in the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, but in the ridiculous Syſtems and ſelfiſh Inventions of *Prieſts*. And it was no Wonder the *Heathens* were backward and afraid to embrace a Religion, in which the involuntary Miſtake of a prieſtly Diſtinction, without a Meaning, might coſt them their Lives, and ruin their Families.

So terrible and deform'd had mercileſs Chriſtian Prieſts render'd the merciful and amiable Chriſtian Religion! Their outrageous Zeal was become ſo powerful, and had ſuch bloody Effects, that the *Pagan* Perſecutions were real Advantages to Chriſtianity, as they gave it a breathing Time from the more fatal Perſecutions, and even Adulterations, of its own Prieſts; who, while the Civil Sword was over their Heads, being obliged to abſcond or fly, could not throw about their Balls of Contention and War; and, therefore, againſt their Will, left Religion to flouriſh, as it always did, under thoſe *Pagan* Perſecutions, which their own turbulent and ſeditious Behaviour had often brought upon it. This is indeed their higheſt Praiſe, that the Church reap'd Good from their Wickedneſs.

The *Pagan Perſecutions* no ſooner ceaſed, but the War of the *Chriſtian Prieſts* recommenced; and the Perſecutions rais'd by them were ever more mercileſs and more dreadful, than thoſe which were rais'd by the *Heathen Princes*; forasmuch as they added, as far

far as they could, the Deſtruction of the Soul to that of the Body: So compleat was their Vengeance! And, beſides, it had no End: The Severity of the *Heathens* had long and frequent Intermiſſions; but the Cruelty of the *Prieſts* was inſatiable.

The Perſecutions practis'd by the *Pagans* had, moreover, this Mitigation, that they were occaſion'd for the moſt Part by the Words and external Behaviour of Chriſtians, who contemn'd their Gods, neglected their Temples, and ridicul'd their Manner of Worſhip: In all which, tho' they had Reaſon and Truth on their Side; yet they provok'd by ſo doing theſe ignorant Bigots, whoſe falſe Religion laid no Reſtraint upon their Paſſions, but on the contrary, greatly inflam'd them. But the prieſtly War was waged againſt the Mind it ſelf; the free and independent Mind! They would be controuling the *voluntary, neceſſary and invincible* Motions and Operations of the Soul; and be putting Bonds upon the Imagination, which is as ungovernable as the Wind or the Sea. You muſt ſay after them, nay you muſt *think* after them, and believe by their Direction; and either be Slaves or Hypocrites. A terrible and inflexible Tyranny! It was to no Purpoſe to alledge, that you could not perform Impoſſibilities, nor ſee with other Mens Eyes: You muſt be puniſh'd for what you could not help; you muſt be deliver'd to Satan, in ſpite of your Innocence; and re-

rewarded with Hell for your Sincerity, and Well-meaning: And the ſame honeſt Qualities which entitled you to the certain Favour of God, provok'd the certain Vengeance of his pretended Ambaſſadors; to whoſe Empire, Vertue and Truth are ever the moſt formidable Foes. To compleat this ghoſtly Barbarity, not appeas'd by Death and Damnation, your good Name muſt be murder'd with your Body, and your Memory loaded with monſtrous Calumnies, and bitter Defamations; which mercileſs Treatment could be expected only from that accurſed Spirit, who has been a *Lyar and a Murtherer from the Beginning*; or from thoſe who are acted by him. To pity you, was unpardonable; and to ſpeak well of you, was to involve all thoſe who did it, in your Doom. Thus holy Wrath is, of all others, the ſooneſt kindled, the fierceſt while it burns, and the ſloweſt in going out, if ever it goes out.

It would be endleſs to give Inſtances of the bloody Spirit of ſuch ſort of Churchmen. They are the only Body of Men upon Earth, who poſſeſs leaſt of human Compaſſion. They have been even ingenious in Cruelty, and ſhew'd vaſt Invention in their rigid, various, implacable and exquiſite Manner of executing it. *Ita feri, ut ſe mori ſentiat*, ſeems to have been the Doctrine and Delight of the *Church*, as well as of *Caligula*. Neither He, nor *Phalaris*, nor *Perillus*, nor *Nero*, nor any other *Pagan* Monſter, who made himſelf Sport with

with human Agonies and Misery, has exceeded them in the Variety and Inhumanity of his projected Tortures, or equall'd them in the Length.

It is a melancholly Observation, that the *Mahometans*, who by Principle use the Sword, as their great and most prevailing Apostle for the Propagation of their Religion, do yet frankly tolerate Christianity, and every Sect of it, all over their Dominions; and that, on the contrary, *Christians*, who by the Doctrine of the Gospel are allow'd the Use of no Means but those of Gentleness and Perswasion, to promote the Faith of *Jesus Christ*, do yet exercise Fierceness and Barbarity upon all who differ from them, where-ever the Mercy of the Government does not restrain the Cruelty of the Clergy. Thus far the *Turks* act, as if they were conducted by Grace, and obey'd the Precepts of our Blessed Saviour; and thus far the Christians act, as if they had adopted the Spirit and Fierceness of *Mahomet*, and renounced the Gospel for the *Alcoran*.

However, that I may not seem partial to the *Mahometans*, I shall add this mournful Reflection, namely, *That too many of the Christian Clergy do justly share with these Infidels, the infamous Praise of having almost dispeopled the Earth. The Infidels have slain their Thousands, and They their Ten Thousands.* They have been the great Promoters of Cruelty and the Sword; they have

have been the conſtant Patrons of Arbitrary Power, that mighty Engine for rendering Mankind few and miſerable; they have been the continual Authors of Wars, Famine and Maſſacres; and, in fine, they have been the great Inſtruments of driving Virtue, Truth, Peace, Mercy, Plenty and People, out of the World. *Kill all*, ſaid the Abbot *Arnold*, a Monk militant, to the Army, which being employ'd by the Church to ſlaughter the poor pious *Albigenſes*, had taken the City of *Bezeir*, and being Laymen, were inclining to have ſome Mercy; *Kill all*, cried this bloody Prieſt, *God knows his own, and will reward them hereafter.* Accordingly Two Hundred Thouſand of theſe conſcientious Chriſtians, and the Catholicks mix'd with them, were inſtantly butcher'd for the Church.

To conclude; our modern Claimers of Church-Authority, do but contend for the ſame Power and Advantages, which enabled and prompted theſe their Brethren to execute ſuch numerous and melancholly Miſchiefs; and whether they ought to poſſeſs that Power, and theſe Advantages, or no, I take to be the great Point in Debate between the *Biſhop of Bangor* and his Adverſaries.

NUMBER XLI.

Wednesday, October 26. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM.

THAT Religion, or the Worship of a Deity, is natural to Man, is confess'd by Mr. *Hobbes* himself in his *Leviathan*, wherein he endeavours to assign the natural Causes thereof: And no History or Voyages give us an Account of any Country, in any Manner civilized, without Religion, as well as Priests or Ministers, and Temples or Places of Worship. Men have been in all Ages so prone to Religion, that rather than not have one, they have been contented to worship the most abject Beings in Nature; and indeed, nothing seems to have been too absurd and ridiculous for them to believe and practise, under the Direction of any Men, who had Confidence enough to take upon them to be spiritual Guides of the People. It was ever sufficient,

to pretend to teach Religion, to make any Thing to be received as Religion.

The Egyptians *worſhip'd Dogs, and for*
That Faith made internecine War.
Others adored a Rat, and ſome
For that Church ſuffer'd Martyrdom.
The Indians *fought for the Truth*
Of th' Elephant's and Monkey's Tooth.
But no Beaſt ever was ſo ſlight,
For Man as for his God to fight.
They have more Wit, Alaſs! and know
Themſelves and us better than ſo.

HUDIBRAS.

Nor is this Diſpoſition at all abated in the World. The Pagan Part is much the ſame. And many Chriſtians are more prone, if poſſible, to Abſurdity and Folly, than the Pagans. The Popiſh, *Greek*, and ſeveral other Chriſtian Sects worſhip a *Breaden God*: And, beſides other numerous Abſurdities and Follies, exceed them in that grand One of all, *of delivering up their Perſons, Eſtates, and Conſciences to the Prieſt; and of hating, damning, perſecuting, and burning one another, and all who have any Difference in Opinion with them, as he inſpires them*: Wherein they outgo both the ancient and modern Pagans, who have generally given Toleration to Men of different Religions from themſelves, and have in no Place gone thoſe Lengths in Perſecution which ſome Chriſtians

(or

(or rather ſome Perſons pretending to be Chriſtians) have done.

As a farther Proof that Religion is natural to Man, I obſerve, that no Hiſtory informs us, that ever *Atheiſm* (by which I underſtand a direct Denial of the Exiſtence of a Deity, a Providence, and Worſhip) was able to introduce it ſelf among the People of any Country whatſoever.

Religion is not only natural to Man, but eſteemed neceſſary to Government by Princes and States, who, whether they themſelves have believed any Religion, or no, have eſtabliſhed Forms of Religion, and been willing that their Subjects ſhould obey them, and defend their Country, upon a Principle of Religion, as knowing its powerful Operation on the Minds of Men.

And beſides, Religion has a great Support from Prieſts or Divines, who are very numerous every where, and have a Zeal for every Form they profeſs, equal to the Intereſt they derive from it: And if the Intereſt of one Form runs low, many of them can change their Party, and become zealous for another Religion; as they did three times, in the Compaſs of five Years, in *England*, in the Reigns of *Edward* the Sixth, *Mary* and *Elizabeth*; the non-complying Clergy never amounting to two hundred under any of thoſe Changes.

Great Complaints indeed have been and are daily made in relation to the mighty

Growth of *Atheiſm*. But thoſe Complaints ſeem to me for the moſt Part, if not altogether, groundleſs, and to be generally Calumnies of High-Church Prieſts, and High-Church Men, upon the beſt Chriſtians, *viz.* ſuch who profeſs themſelves ready to ſubmit to the Authority of Jeſus Chriſt, but refuſe Submiſſion to any Prieſts, whether they be the *Greek*, *Muſcovite*, *Roman*, *Dutch*, *Scotch*, or *Engliſh*.

There is not, therefore, and cannot be, any Danger of the Overthrow of *Religion*, as long as Men continue Men; Religion will neceſſarily prevail amongſt us, and every where elſe, in virtue of Mens general Diſpoſition to Religion, either under one or ſeveral Forms, according as the Civil Magiſtrates of the World are more or leſs perſuaded, that they themſelves are to dictate (or to dictate after a Prieſt) Religion to their Subjects.

The noiſy Outcry therefore of the Danger of Religion from *Atheiſm* or *Irreligion*, is a meer Chimera of the High Prieſts; which, in all likelihood, they ſtart to put Men on a falſe Scent, and to diſguiſe and carry on their own Deſigns of Power and Wealth: For while People are alarm'd with the Fears of *Atheiſm*, they are diſpoſed to fall into all the pretended Meaſures of the Prieſt to ſuppreſs it, and to become zealous for him, who never fails to make Uſe of the Panick or Madneſs of the People (which is his Opportunity) to eſtabliſh Doctrines and Practices

ctices for his own Advantage, which, at his Suggeſtion they falſly ſuppoſe to be moſt oppoſite to *Atheiſm*, and to be the beſt Means to ſuppreſs it.

But the conſtant Danger, and the great and only Concern we ought to have, is leſt, under the Colour and Name of *Religion*, or the Worſhip of God, we have not only Falſhood and Superſtition put upon us, but the moſt deteſtable and wicked Practices introduced; ſuch as tend to the Deſtruction of all Peace, both Publick and Private; all Virtue, Learning, and whatever is praiſe-worthy among Men. This is Practical Atheiſm: This is the Atheiſm to be dreaded and feared: This is the Atheiſm whereof we are in Danger: This is the worſt Conſequence we have to fear from ſpeculative Atheiſm; for no Man can ſay worſe of ſpeculative *Atheiſm*, than that it leads neceſſarily to all Immorality: And in fine, this *Atheiſm* the Prieſt has, in moſt Places of the World, introduced as Religion, to the utter Overthrow of true Religion; (which conſiſts chiefly, if not ſolely, in ſuch Particulars as are for the Good of Society;) for by making Men wicked out of Conſcience, and upon a Principle of Religion, he as effectually deſtroys true Religion, as if he introduced ſpeculative *Atheiſm*. What is it to a Believer in Chriſt, whether he be perſecuted for his Religion by a *Papiſt*, who does it religiouſly, and upon a Principle of Conſcience; or by an *Atheiſt*, who does it

either to protect himſelf, or to get Credit in the World, or to go Snacks with the Prieſt, in the Advantages ariſing from Perſecution? Do Men ſuffer leſs by a Civil or Foreign War, begun by Zealots, on a Principle of Religion, to promote Religion; than if begun by *Atheiſts*, for the Sake of Ambition, Glory, Power, Rapine, or Murther? Are the Feuds, Animoſities and Paſſions, ſtirred up by Prieſts on Account of Religion, fewer and leſs diſturbing of the Publick Peace, than thoſe of Men left to the Conduct of *Atheiſtical* Principles? Is it not equal to Husbands to be wronged by *Atheiſts*, who need no Pardon, as by *Popiſh* Prieſts, who can pardon one another; or High Churchmen, who, notwithſtanding ſuch Actions, can be countenanced by the Prieſt, and merit greatly with him, on account of his Zeal for the Church, that is, the Prieſt? Nay, is not the Danger of Cuckoldom equal from a *Popiſh* Prieſt (who, by his Power of confeſſing and abſolving the Woman, has ſo glorious an Opportunity) as from an *Atheiſt*? And would our High Prieſts, if they could get the Nation to be perſwaded that they have the ſame Power of confeſſing and abſolving, (as they have of late been attempting to do in their Books and Sermons) be leſs Cuckold-makers than *Popiſh* Prieſts and *Atheiſts*?

Could an *Atheiſt* be a greater Calumniator than Dr. *S — e*? Could an *Atheiſt*, who thinks no Deference due to a Biſhop, have leſs Re-

gard

gard for the Honour of a Chriſtian Biſhop than Dr. *S—e*, who pretends to think Biſhops have Divine Authority? Could an *Atheiſt*, after he had been convicted of Calumny, and forced to confeſs his Evidence for the Calumny failed him, be more hardened in Villany, than to make no Satisfaction to, and ask no Pardon of the Perſon injured, but perſiſt in ſuppoſing that Time will diſcover his Charge to be true? Could a Set of *Atheiſts* have patroniſed *Calumny* more, than to have called that Doctor to be the Head of their Society; and might they not with equal Regard to Virtue and Religion, have choſen a Highwayman, or a Pick-pocket, who gives his Money for the Augmentation of poor Livings? Has a Modern Biſhop more Satisfaction in being thus attacked by a High Church Prieſt, ſupported and abetted by others, or is the Society leſs diſturbed by ſuch Proceedings, than if ſuch Prieſts were all *Atheiſts*?

Laſtly, Is it not equally deſtructive of Liberty and Property, for Eccleſiaſticks to uſe religious Cheats and Tricks to get Money from the People, towards raiſing and maintaining a needleſs Army of Black Coats, to live lazily in Monaſteries, and other Religious Houſes; as for *Atheiſts* to uſe any civil Tricks to maintain a needleſs ſtanding Army of Red Coats, or by their Arts to plunder the Publick for any of their other Purpoſes?

The Deſign therefore of ſome following Papers ſhall be, to ſhew how the High Church Jacobite Clergy promote true *Atheiſm* and Irreligion: That the Laity may be put on the true Scent of *Atheiſm*: That they may have a juſt Dread of the true *Atheiſm*: That they may ceaſe to be *Atheiſts*, or Worſhippers of the Prieſt, and ceaſe to receive Religion on his Authority; and that they may return to God and Chriſt, the ſole Authors of all true Religion.

NUMBER XLII.

Wedneſday, November 2. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM. *Part* 2.

I Proceed, as I promis'd in my laſt, to ſhew, by an Induction of Particulars, how the High-Church Prieſts promote *true Atheiſm* or Irreligion, by which I mean *Practical Atheiſm.*

I. And,

I. And, first, I will begin with Perjury, or False Swearing.

I will venture to lay it down as a Truth in Politicks, that Oaths (or something equivalent to them) are, on many Occasions, necessary in Government; and that Peace among Neighbours, Punishment of Rogues, and the Settlement of Property, depend upon them. In the next Place, I will lay down as religious Truths, that an Oath is a solemn Act, both of natural and reveal'd Religion; that Oaths to a Government are to be kept; that there is no greater Irreligion, no greater Affront to God, no greater Insincerity and Injustice to Man, than Perjury; and no Point of Religion, upon which the Honour of God, and the Welfare of Mankind, are more highly concern'd, than in keeping Oaths; that Oaths of Allegiance to a Government intend Loyalty; that Oaths are to be taken in the Sense of the Imposers; that the Heart is to concur with the Lips in repeating them; that Men are to have no mental Reserves in taking Oaths; and that they must not design to break them, nor take them with Design to repent of them.

And yet, on this Head, *Atheists* cannot be guilty of greater Irreligion than some of our High-Churchmen, (under the Conduct of our High-Church Priests) who sometimes are not for restraining our Kings by their Coronation

nation Oaths; and, at other Times, are not for reſtraining the People, by their Oaths of Allegiance: that is, they are at one Time for breaking Oaths, by contending for unlimited Power, and unlimited Obedience; and at another Time for breaking Oaths, by retrenching the Authority of the Prince, and Allegiance of the Subject. Under this Reign, they are for the latter Perjury: as appears by their open Rebellions; their irreverent Diſcourſes of the Perſon, and Family, of his Majeſty; their Endeavours to alienate from him the Hearts of his Subjects; and inſpiring the People with Diſaffection to his Government; their inventing and reporting defamatory Stories, to blemiſh his Character, and weaken his Authority; their rejoycing at any publick Diſtractions; their taking ſides with the *French*, *Turks*, *Swedes*, *Spaniards* and *Muſcovites*, whenever any of theſe Nations are in Meaſures contrary to the Intereſt of his Majeſty; and laſtly, by their ridiculing and cracking Jeſts upon the State-Oaths, and citing, as a ſort of Scripture, theſe Verſes of *Hudibras*;

He that Impoſes an Oath makes it,
Not he that for Convenience takes it,
Then how can any Man be ſaid
To break an Oath he never made?

And theſe Things are done by them, not after an Atheiſtical Manner; not under the Ap-

Appearance of attacking and ridiculing Religion and Virtue, the Joys of Heaven, and the Fears of Hell; but almoſt as if Slander and Calumny, Treaſon and Sedition, were Articles of their Church, which they were in Duty oblig'd to perform. They pretend all the while to be religious Men, good Churchmen; concern'd for the Church's Safety; Enemies of falſe Religion, and particularly of *Presbyterianiſm*; and zealous for the Orthodox Faith, contain'd in St. ATHANASIUS's Creed. And tho' the High-Church Prieſts have not as yet written any Books to defend this Manner of taking and keeping Oaths; yet they take a Method, no leſs effectual to recommend it: They not only do not bear their Teſtimony againſt this open Wickedneſs, this open practical *Atheiſm*, (as is their Duty) but are active themſelves in the ſame Practices, and countenance the Guilty, by the Credit and Applauſe they give them; and the Diſtinction they ſhew towards them, recommending them as good Churchmen, and reviling others, principally, for being faithful to the Oaths they have taken to the Government. All which is more effectual to promote Perjury, than direct dogmatizing in Behalf of it; for this ſly Way gets them the Applauſe of many, and prevents the Clamour of others againſt them; who would be generally deteſted, notwithſtanding the Devotion of the People towards them, if they openly defended Perjury.

Now,

Now, pray, what is the Difference between theſe High-Churchmen and *Atheiſts*? Can *Atheiſts* be leſs bound by Oaths? Can *Atheiſts* be worſe Subjects? Are not *Atheiſts* deteſtable, becauſe it is ſuppos'd they cannot be bound by Oaths? And are others leſs deteſtable, whom Oaths do not bind? Can any Thing be ſaid worſe of *Atheiſts*, than what Mr. LESLEY ſays (in his *Anſwer* to *King's State of the Proteſtants in* Ireland) that *the Parliament cannot make an Oath which the Clergy will not take?* Had not King *GEORGE* Reaſon to apprehend as much Miſchief from his Swearing — Religious — Factious — Rebel — Church-Subjects, as he could have from Swearing — Rebel-*Atheiſts?* Was the Caſe of the Diſſenters, and other good Subjects, who were plundered before the Rebellion for their Loyalty, or ſuffered in the Rebellion, better for receiving ſuch Uſage from the Hands of High-Churchmen, than from *Atheiſts?* They are plainly as bad as *Atheiſts* can ever be ſuppoſed to be; worſe than *Atheiſts*, acting by the Principles of Eaſe and Self-Preſervation, which may be ſuppos'd to be the moſt general Principles of Action in *Atheiſts*; and, in fine, worſe than any profligate Libertines I ever met with in *Italy* it ſelf, (that Seat of High-Churchſhip) whom I never heard talk ſo irreligiouſly about Oaths, as I have heard ſome High-Churchmen, or deliver ſuch open Perjury as Parſon *B—ſe*. What adds to the

Wicked-

Wickedneſs and Guilt of theſe High-Churchmen, is, that they pretend to be Chriſtians, and to take their Religion from the New Teſtament; that they are of a Church, whoſe diſtinguiſhing Doctrine is Loyalty to the Prince, and which they extend ſo far as to allow Reſiſtance in no Caſe to be lawful; and that they have a Sovereign, againſt whom they have nothing to object, but his Virtues, his mild, equal, impartial and juſt Adminiſtration of Government; for as to his Title (which is the beſt of Titles, *viz.* the voluntary Eſtabliſhment of a free People by an Act of their Legiſlature) theſe Swearing High-Churchmen can have no juſt Scruple.

Theſe High-Churchmen therefore are *true Atheiſts*; They are practical *Atheiſts*. The ſpeculative Difference between them and *Atheiſts*, is a Matter of ſmall Moment; for what is it to their Neighbours, while they act like Atheiſts, that they believe in God and Religion? For while they act like *Atheiſts*, they do all the Miſchief that *Atheiſts* can do, and all thoſe Things for which alone *Atheiſm* is ſo juſtly deteſtable. For if Speculative *Atheiſm* did not lead Men to Immorality, to Faction, to Rebellion, *&c.* it would be ſo far from being deteſtable, that it would be preferable to any Religion that ſpoil'd Mens Morals, and made them bad Subjects: And I would rather have a Speculative *Atheiſt* for my Neighbour, and Fellow-Subject, and run the Hazard of his being a vicious Man,

than

than an Orthodox-Religious Man, whoſe Religion made him Vicious.

NUMBER XLIII.

Wedneſday, November 9. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM. *Part* 3.

THE next Article of *Atheiſm*, that I charge upon High-Church Prieſts and High-Churchmen, ſhall relate to the very Being of Religion, and that is, *Toleration of Religion*; for unleſs there be a *Toleration of Religion*, Religion, which is a Matter of Choice and Conſcience, is almoſt excluded the World.

It is aſſerted by Mr. HOBBES, that the Civil Magiſtrate of every Country is the Legiſlator in Matters of Religion; that his Subjects ought to obey him therein; and that, if they do not, they ſhould be compelled by Force to profeſs that Religion he enjoyns. Which Doctrine implies *Speculative Atheiſm*, as it deſtroys *God's Dominion*, by ſubverting his

his Authority and Laws, and by making a God of the Magiſtrate; and as it roots out all Religion, by taking away Mens Right to follow their Conſciences therein; which conſtitutes the very Eſſence of Religion: And it muſt introduce *Practical Atheiſm*, if follow'd; by diſturbing, diſtreſſing, impriſoning, and taking away the Lives of the beſt Men; by ſetting Men at Variance with one another, and cauſing Civil Wars on a religious Account; and by leaving Men to be govern'd only by the Laws of the Civil Magiſtrate, and taking away all Motives to good Actions drawn from Conſcience towards God.

Now the ſpeculative Principles of High-Church Prieſts, and thoſe of *Atheiſts*, differ but little from each other, and the Practices following from both their Principles are the ſame; that is, the High-Church Prieſts muſt be no leſs *Practical Atheiſts*, than the *Speculative Atheiſts* themſelves.

1. For, Firſt, as to the *Speculative Principles* of High-Church Prieſts. Tho' the High-Church Prieſts contend for *a Law of God*, a *Bible* and a *Conſcience*; yet they as effectually ſubvert thoſe good Things, as the *Atheiſts*, by aſſerting, at the ſame Time, a Right in the Civil Magiſtrate to compel Men, by Laws, or Force, to embrace the true Religion: For what is the Difference between a Right in the Magiſtrate to compel Men to embrace the true Religion, and a Right in the

the Magiſtrate to compel Men to embrace *his Religion*, which he will always think the beſt and true Religion.

All the Arguments of High-Church Prieſts for Church-Authority, and Church-Unity, imploy the ſame *Atheiſm*. For do they not therein contend for *Submiſſion to Man* in Matters of Religion, and for the Sacrifice of ſome Mens Conſciences to the Judgments of other Men? Which is ſubverting the *Law of God*, the *Bible*, and *Conſcience*, no leſs, than veſting the Power and Compulſion in the Civil Magiſtrate.

But their Arguments againſt all Innovations, in Matters of Religion, are moſt *Atheiſtical*. They contend ſo generally againſt Innovations, that they cite with Approbation MÆCENAS's Advice to AUGUSTUS, *viz.* That he *ſhould follow conſtantly the Eſtabliſh'd Religion of his Country; for all Innovations would foment Sedition in the State, and be a Means to ſubvert his Government.* Which Advice (tho' it ſo manifeſtly aſſerts *Atheiſm* and *Hobbiſm*, and implies, that neither AUGUSTUS, in whoſe Reign our Bleſſed Saviour CHRIST was born, nor any other Pagan Prince, ought to permit Chriſtianity, which is the moſt pure and peaceable Religion, to become *the Eſtabliſhed Religion of* their *Country*) Dr. *Dawſon* has lately had the Confidence to lay before the preſent Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*; whoſe Conduct and Writings, before he was promoted to

that

that See, gave not the Doctor the leaſt Ground to ſuſpect that worthy Prelate would approve ſuch *Atheiſm*, Irreligion, and *Anti-Chriſtianiſm*; and no Man dares *ſay* they have done ſo ſince.

2. Secondly, The Practices following from the Principles of High-Church Prieſts, are the ſame with thoſe following from the Principles of *Atheiſm*. For do not many Chriſtian Civil Magiſtrates exerciſe the Right aſſerted by High-Church Prieſts to belong to them, and fine, burn, impriſon, inflict Corporal Puniſhments, take away Mens natural Rights, merely becauſe Men follow their Conſciences in what they are perſwaded is the Law of God? And what more can be done in Virtue of any *Atheiſtical Principles*? Nor do the Notions of *a Bible*, a *Law of God*, and *a Conſcience*, (however inconſiſtent ſuch Notions are with making penal Laws in Matters of Religion) render High-Churchmen leſs Perſecutors, than if they were acted by any *Atheiſtical* Principles; as is manifeſt from what is done in moſt Countries, where, in Proportion to the Power and Influence of High-Church Prieſts, Degrees of Violence upon Mens Conſciences prevail: Nor do the Precepts of Chriſt, who requires all Men to *ſearch* the Scriptures, and to believe and live according to the Rules there laid down, and who never ſends Men to the Magiſtrate or the eſtabliſh'd Prieſts for the underſtanding of the *Bible*, abate in the leaſt

their perſecuting Zeal. Nor laſtly, does the moſt perfect Morality taught by CHRIST; who every where inculcates *Love* of Mankind, *Forbearance*, (and Forgiveneſs even of many Immoralities) and univerſal *Charity*, and who has ſaid, *By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another*; reſtrain the High-Church Prieſt from ſtirring up in Mens Minds the utmoſt Hatred, Malice, and Fury of Men againſt one another; who ſeem to learn little elſe from their Prieſt as Matter of Religion, but the *Doctrine of Malice* againſt thoſe whom he diſlikes. Which *Doctrine* they practiſe with ſuch Warmth and Zeal, as if it was the principal or only Article of Religion: And therein do more Miſchief, than Men acted by Atheiſtical Principles can be ſuppos'd to do; for *Atheiſm* is as incapable of making Men uncharitable to one another, on Account of Religion, as it is inconſiſtent with true Religion to be uncharitable.

How theſe Atheiſtical Practices have prevail'd in *England*, even ſince the Reformation, (for I will not mention the Times before, wherein this *prieſtly Atheiſm* was rampant) is apparent from our Hiſtory, which gives an Account of the burning, hanging, fining, impriſoning, ſtarving in Goals, baniſhing, corporal Puniſhments, and harraſſing Thouſands of good and religious People, on the Score of Religion; upon which I crave Leave to make theſe Obſervations.

1. *Firſt*,

1. *First*, That as the High-Church Prieſts have been always moſt forward in making and defending Penal Laws; ſo they have been the moſt Barbarous and Malicious in putting them in Execution, where they were intruſted with it, as is manifeſt from the Proceedings in the *Star-Chamber*; where, under the Influence of Archbiſhop LAUD, and ſuch High-Prieſts, exorbitant Fines, ſlitting Noſes, cutting off Ears, branding the Face with hot Irons, ſevere Whipping, the Pillory, and Impriſonment for Life in Dungeons, or Places either unwholſome or remote from Friends, were common Puniſhments; and ſome times all inflicted upon one Man. Upon pronouncing One of theſe Sentences againſt LEIGHTON, LAUD pull'd off his Cap, and gave Thanks to God. But the Lay Part of the Court were merely Prieſt-driven, and outwitted by LAUD in ſuch Sentences: For when a Knight mov'd one of the Lords about the Dreadfulneſs of the Sentence, intimating, that it open'd a Gap to the Prelates to inflict ſuch diſgraceful Puniſhments and Tortures upon Men of Quality; that Lord reply'd, *'twas but* in terrorem, *and that* he *would not have any one think, that the Sentence ſhould ever be executed.* But that Lord (either judging of other Men by himſelf, or perhaps joining in the Sentence upon a Promiſe from LAUD, that it ſhould not be executed) found himſelf miſtaken in LAUD, who, having long diveſted himſelf of all

Lay Pity, caus'd the Sentence to be rigorously put in Execution.

2. *Secondly*, The Eccleſiaſtical Commiſſioners in the High Commiſſion Court put the *Oath ex Officio* upon thoſe brought before them on the Score of Religion; an *Oath*, unjuſt in it ſelf, as it obliged the Parties to anſwer all Interrogatories, and thereby made all Honeſt Men, if guilty of any Thing eſteem'd a Fault, their own Accuſers; and an *Oath*, neither founded on Act of Parliament, nor on Common Law in that Caſe. After what Manner this uſurp'd Power of adminiſtring that Oath was exercis'd, you cannot have better expreſs'd, than in the Words of the Lord Treaſurer BURLEIGH to Archbiſhop WHITGIFT. Your *Articles* are *ſo curiouſly pen'd, ſo full of Branches and Circumſtances, that the Inquiſitors of* Spain *uſe not ſo many Queſtions to comprehend and entrap their Preys.*

3. *Thirdly*, I obſerve, that whenever the Parliament has been diſpos'd to introduce the Practice of our Saviour's *Doctrine of Love and Charity*, by repealing any penal and ſanguinary Laws, the High Church Biſhops always oppos'd ſuch Repeal. In Proof whereof I will give the Reader but one Inſtance, referring him to his own Obſervation for more Proofs in the Caſe. In 1677, when the Nation and Parliament were under great Apprehenſions from Popery and a Popiſh Succeſſor, and fear'd, leſt the *Law for Burning Hereticks*

Hereticks would be ſoon put in Execution againſt Proteſtants, a Repeal of that *Law* was attempted and ſucceeded: But it was oppos'd by the Biſhops, who deſir'd, that *Law might continue* in terrorem *to Fanaticks*, tho' *God forbid*, ſaid they, *it ſhould ever be put in Execution.* This Fact, and many others of the ſame Kind, will ſoon be made more known by the (late) Biſhop of *Sarum*'s *Hiſtory of his Times.*

4. *Fourthly*, I obſerve, that the Perſecutions ſince the Reformation have moſtly been for errant Trifles, and Things of the leaſt Importance to the World: We have been chiefly plagu'd and ſet together by the Ears, about *Caps*, *Hoods*, *Surplices*, *Ceremonies*, *external Forms*, removing *Tables* from one Part of a Church to another, and *Railing* them in. But the moſt extraordinary Subject of Perſecution and Animoſities, and that ſeems peculiar to our High-Church, was the *Book* of *Sports*. High-Church having taken a Fancy to make it Religion to have no Sermons on *Sundays* in an Afternoon; but, inſtead thereof, to make the People *Dance* and *Play*, in Oppoſition to Puritans and Diſſenters, who, it ſeems, were ſo irreligious as to think they were oblig'd to ſpend their *Sundays* after divine Service was over, in Family or private Devotion: That *Book* was iſſu'd out by Authority; and many godly Clergymen were harraſs'd for not reading it as many Laymen were for not turning that *Holy-Day* into a *Play-Day*. But

But to the Glory of King GEORGE, this *prieſtly Atheiſm* of Perſecution is now vaniſhing. His Majeſty began his Reign with a noble Declaration for *Toleration*, wherein he allows his Subjects to have a Right to a Religion and a Conſcience: The Perſecution commenc'd by a High Church Prieſt againſt Honeſt WHISTON fell; and the Promoter is defeated of all Hopes of getting his Charges by a Biſhoprick: The Biſhop of *Bangor* has preach'd up the Authority of *God* and *Chriſt* before his Majeſty; and his *Majeſty* (the Head of our Church, the ſupreme Ordinary, and the ſole Fountain of all Eccleſiaſtical, as well as Civil Authority) has preach'd it to the Nation: Some penal Laws have been repeal'd; wherein our truly Chriſtian Prelates had, to their immortal Honour, their Share: Liberty of Examination and Debate (which is the moſt Sacred of all Principles, as it is the ſole Foundation of all common Senſe, Truth, and true Chriſtianity) grows upon us: A Majority of Diſſenting Miniſters, aſſembled in a Synod, have declar'd for the *Bible*; which was never before done by any Synod of Prieſts, who have always endeavour'd to eſtabliſh their own or ſome other Human Authority. The High-Prieſts dare not plainly excite the Mob to burn, plunder, and moleſt their Neighbours; but are in great Meaſure reduc'd to Pulpit and private railing and damning. The *ſole Perſecution* now on Foot, and countenanc'd by Au-

Authority, is, *That High-Church cannot perſecute Diſſenters*; for it is eſteemed by ſome a *Church-Perſecution* not to be able to perſecute others: And laſtly, I dare write the *Independent Whig*

O Glorious King *George*! O the Happineſs of a Nation to be govern'd by ſuch a Monarch! Of whom I cannot but obſerve, that he ſeems to me the Favourite of Heaven, which ſo bleſſes all his Deſigns with Succeſs, that he need not fear Succeſs in any truly virtuous or religious Deſigns. And (that I may uſe the printed Words of Mr. BOLD, an excellent Divine of our Church)

'It is no ſmall Encouragement to all, who 'have any Acquaintance with the Chriſtian 'Religion, to reſt aſſured, that God will 'in due Time, notwithſtanding all the Ma'chinations and Efforts of ill People, bring 'Matters in this Land to an happy Iſſue, 'becauſe none are againſt the Government 'of our moſt Excellent Sovereign King 'GEORGE and the Proteſtant Succeſſion, 'but who are alſo againſt the Lord JESUS 'CHRIST being ſole King in his own 'Kingdom; and conſequently againſt his be'ing ſole Law-giver to, and Judge of his 'own Subjects, in Matters of Conſcience, 'and which relate to their eternal Salva'tion.

NUMBER XLIV.

Wedneſday, November 16. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM. *Part* 4.

AS a further Proof of the Charge of *Practical Atheiſm* upon High-Church Prieſts, I proceed to ſhew how they confound and ſubvert all Morality and Holineſs of Life; which is the main Deſign of all Religion, and more particularly of the Chriſtian.

1. This they do, in the firſt Place, by teaching the moſt Immoral and Unholy Doctrines, and thereby leading Men to Actions, in the higheſt degree, prejudicial to human Society.

To *do as we would be done unto*, and to *love our Neighbour as our ſelves*, are Moral and Chriſtian Principles, of daily and moſt general uſe. We cannot converſe a Moment, without acting agreeably or contrary to them.

And

And the Happineſs of Society conſiſts, in great Meaſure, in the Practice of thoſe Duties; as the Miſery of Society conſiſts in their Breach. For what is Happineſs in Society, but the Prevalency of univerſal Love, and equal Favour and Juſtice? And what greater Degree of Love can we ſhew to others, than that Love wherewith we love our ſelves? And what can a whole Society wiſh for more, than that equal Favour and Juſtice be diſtributed among them? And what is Miſery in Society, but Malice, and Hatred, and Partiality; and their Conſequences, Diſorder, Confuſion and War?

Now the High Prieſt dogmatizes againſt theſe fundamentel Maxims of Morality, whenever he contends againſt the Right of Men to judge for themſelves in Religion, which he pretends to uſe himſelf; whenever he contends for Penalties, or Diſcouragements of any Kind, againſt thoſe who differ in Opinion from him, which he would not at the ſame time think juſt to have inflicted on himſelf for differing in Opinion from them; whenever he damns Men as Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, in Caſes wherein he would not damn himſelf; whenever he judges whole Sects or Bodies of Men inſincere, (as is his conſtant Method towards Diſſenters) and would not at the ſame time be thought inſincere himſelf; and, in fine, whenever he preaches contrary to that Love of all Men, that Forbearance, that Forgiveneſs of Injuries, that Meekneſs,

that

that Peace and Quiet, that Beneficence to all in Diſtreſs, and that Charity (the greateſt of Moral and Chriſtians Virtues) which *beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things*, which is the Charity taught in the Goſpel; all which he cannot but be willing to ſee prevail in the World, with reſpect to himſelf. How often the High Prieſt preaches after this Manner; or rather how ſeldom he preaches otherwiſe; and how ſucceſsful he is in introducing the *Practical Atheiſm* ſuited to ſuch Doctrines, *viz.* Factions, Quarrels, Violence, Injuſtice, Plundering, Partiality, Devaſtation, and Murder; every Obſerver may be ſatisfy'd by his own Experience.

Rebellion is the actual Diſſolution of Order in a Society; and is ever founded either on the Jealouſies and ill-grounded Animoſities of the People in Relation to their Sovereign, or to one another; or on ſuppos'd Defect of Title in the Sovereign. Now theſe our High-Church Prieſts promote and inculcate by their conſtant Lectures of Church-Peril; of the ſad State of the preſent Times, beyond all that ever were before them; of their own want of Power; of Paſſive Obedience and Hereditary Right; and ſeveral other favourite factious Subjects: And this way lead the People to Rebellion; and that in Breach of Oaths, which are the moſt ſacred Band of Society.

And as the High Jacobite Prieſt thus teaches the very worſt Vices, ſo nothing recom-

recommends a Layman to him ſo much as the Practice of them.

2. *Secondly*, The High Church Prieſt ſubverts Morality and Holineſs of Life, by laying an undue Streſs on Matters of little or no Importance; and thereby engages the Thoughts and Affections of Men about them, to the neglect of Morality and that Holineſs of Life, which is the End and Deſign of all Religion. For whoever places Religion in Trifles, will (like the *Jews*, who were much concern'd to pay Tythe to the Prieſt, of Mint, Anniſe and Cummin) *neglect the weightier Matters of the Law.*

What Work have we in *England*; what Hatred, Damning, and Uncharitableneſs is there among us, about mere Ceremonies, and external Forms? And what Arguing and Zeal is there for impoſing them; when a general Agreement in them (as it would be manag'd) would be ſo far from being of any real Uſe in Religion, and tending to Peace, that it would be a Conſpiracy againſt the Rights of Mankind, and againſt that Peace and Charity, which would otherwiſe prevail? For have not Men a Right to follow their Judgments in Matters of Religion, and eſpecially in ſuch Matters as are allow'd to be indifferent in themſelves; and is not that Right invaded by impoſing them? And would not Peace and Charity (which, we ſee, exiſt not under Impoſition) prevail, by allowing Men to practiſe as differently

as

as their Judgments direct them; as we see they do prevail in Countries of Liberty and Toleration, in Proportion to the Degree of Liberty and Toleration allow'd?

What Work is there at this Time, how many Volumes are there daily publish'd, and how deeply concern'd is all *England*, about certain Speculations, whereof the People can understand nothing, and about which the Priest confounds himself? Can the People understand any of the various Schemes and Hypotheses invented by Divines, in relation to the Trinity in Unity, and the Incarnation of God? Does Dr. *Waterland*, who is a very learned, acute and ingenious Person, and has writ two great Books on this Subject, know what he contends for himself, when he expresses the Sum of his Doctrine of the *Trinity in Unity*, in these Words, *That each Divine Person is an individual intelligent Agent: But, as subsisting in one undivided Substance, they are all together, in that respect, but one undivided intelligent Agent?* That is, One Individual is Three Individuals, One undivided Agent is Three undivided Agents, and One Person is Three Persons? And can any Mortal suppose the People to be in the least concern'd about such sophistical Chimeras, crabbed Notions, bombastick Phrases, and Solecisms? And must not Zeal about Ceremonies, and unintelligible Speculations, as much supplant and take the Place of Morality,

rality, as ever *Rites* did among the *Jews*, or the religious Trumpery of the Pagans did among them? Even Zeal for Truth, in certain Points, is not of ſuch Importance as is commonly ſuppos'd. I have been much pleas'd with the Judiciouſneſs and Charity of the following Paſſage in a Sermon of the Preſent Archbiſhop of *Dublin*, the moſt worthy and truly profound Dr. *King*. *Let us ſuppoſe one, who takes all the Deſcriptions we have of God* in Scripture *literally; who imagines him to be a mighty King that ſits in Heaven, and has the Earth for his Footſtool; that at the ſame time has all Things in his View which can happen; that has Thouſands and Thouſands of Miniſters to attend him, all ready to obey and execute his Commands; that has great Love and Favour for ſuch as diligently obey his Orders, and is in a Rage and Fury againſt the Diſobedient: Could any one doubt but he, who in the Simplicity of his Heart ſhould believe theſe Things as literally repreſented, would be ſav'd by Virtue of that Belief; or that he would not have Motives ſtrong enough to oblige him to love, honour, and worſhip God? The Imperfections of ſuch Repreſentations will never be imputed to us as a Fault, provided we do not wilfully diſhonour him by unworthy Notions, and our Conceptions of him be ſuch as may ſufficiently oblige us to perform the Duties he requires at our Hands.* The like may be ſaid of a Man who has miſtaken Notions of the Trinity in Unity, and of the

Perſon

Perſon of Chriſt; provided he does not *wilfully* diſhonour God and Chriſt by his Notions, and *conceives* Chriſt to be a Legiſlator, and a Ruler ſent from God; than which *Conception*, nothing can more oblige us to perform the Duties, that both God and Chriſt require of us.

3. *Thirdly*, There is no Crime, but what has, at Times, and on certain Occaſions, the Support and Encouragement of the Popiſh Prieſt; as there is no Virtue which he does not, at Times, and on certain Occaſions, diſcourage. Let a Man be Whoremaſter, or Drunkard, or Lyar, or Slanderer, or Paſſionate, or Revengeful, or a Cheat; and he may meet with fair Quarter from the High Prieſt, be ſeldom or never reprov'd by him, have his Eſteem and Countenance, and the Character of a good Churchman from him, and be ſure of Prieſtly Abſolution at laſt; provided he heartily eſpouſes the Intereſt of the Prieſt, that is, contends for his Power and Wealth. On the other ſide, let a Man have ever ſo many virtuous Qualities, and let him alſo be a ſincere Believer in Jeſus Chriſt; but without the Quality of eſpouſing the High Popiſh Prieſt's Intereſt; and he will never ſtand ſo fair in the Prieſt's Eyes as the aforeſaid Profligate—Good—Churchman. This Conduct of the Prieſts has a mighty Influence on the Actions of Men, and tends to make them as bad as their Inclinations, and Temper, diſpoſe them

them to be; inaſmuch as the general Eſteem and good Name of moſt Men will depend on the Characters given of them by the Prieſts, who are the general Goſſips, and are reverenced every where for their inward Sanctity, and external long Gowns, and broad-brim'd Hats, the latter ſufficiently manifeſting the former. I will not deny, but that the Prieſts had much rather their Followers were virtuous than otherwiſe; they well knowing, that Credit is to be got by having ſuch Men among them, and that the beſt Harveſt is to be made of the Weakneſs and Superſtition of virtuous Men. But the Bulk of Men being vicious, and the virtuous Man of Senſe being in the Intereſt of Religion, and againſt Prieſtcraft; the aforeſaid High Prieſts are reduc'd to the Neceſſity of countenancing the Vicious, to carry on their own Intereſt with a ſufficient Party.

4. *Fourthly*, High-Church Prieſts, by the Weakneſs of all Popiſh States, except the Common-wealths of *Venice* and *Norcia*, and of moſt of the Proteſtant States, are let into too great a Share of the Civil Governments of *Europe*; and thus by becoming *Acting Politicians*, confound all National, Publick, and Political Morality. For, as the late Biſhop of *Sarum* obſerved, *the Prieſts have a Secret to make the Natives* of a Country *miſerable, in Spite of* any *Abundance, with which Nature has furniſh'd them.*

They

They have not Souls big enough, and tender enough for Government: They have both a Narrowneſs of Spirit, and a Sourneſs of Mind, that does not agree with the Principles of Human Society. Nor have they thoſe Compaſſions for the Miſerable, with which wiſe Governors *ought to temper all their Counſels; for a ſtern Sourneſs of Temper, and an unrelenting Hardneſs of Heart, ſeem to belong to that Sort of Men.*

NUMBER XLV.

Wednesday, November 23. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM. *Part* 5.

SPeculative Atheiſts exiſt but in few Places, and have never been numerous any where; even tho' all thoſe be accounted ſuch, upon whom Atheiſm has ever been charged. But where they do exiſt, they ſeem to me to owe their Riſe principally to Superſtition and Prieſtcraft; and the higher the Church and Prieſt have been, the more numerous have been the Atheiſts: Nay, there ſeems to me more juſt Cauſe to ſuſpect the High-Church Prieſts of Atheiſm, than any other Men.

1. Whoever reaſons himſelf into Atheiſm, undoubtedly reaſons very wrong, and either proceeds on falſe Principles, or makes wrong Concluſions from true ones. But among the

ſeveral falſe Arguments, by which the Atheiſts and looſe People impoſe on themſelves, and endeavour to ſeduce others, there is none more frequently urg'd, than that the current Abſurdities and Superſtitions taught by Prieſts, and the Prieſts Hypocriſy and Villanies, are ſufficient Reaſons to make all Religion be deem'd a Cheat, and *Prieſts of all Religions to be deem'd the ſame.* The Poet ſays, in the Perſon of a Libertine,

——*We know their holy Jugglings,*
Things that would ſtartle Faith, and make us deem,
Not This, or That, but all Religions falſe.

This indeed is pitiful Reaſoning, and ought to be extended no farther than to thoſe Doctrines and Prieſts, againſt whom the Objections lie. But ſo it is Men reaſon; and Experience will prove, that 'tis the High-Church Prieſt, and his Proceedings, which make the Atheiſt. But before I proceed to that Experience, I will ſay this in behalf of this Argument for *Atheiſm*, that the Evil apparent in the World (which ſome urge as an Argument againſt the Exiſtence of a Deity) ſeems to me moſt viſible in the Actions of Prieſts, who do, in my Opinion, create the greateſt Diſorder among Men.

The late Biſhop of *Sarum* tells us, in his Travels, That *a Man of Quality at* Rome, *and*

and an eminent Churchman, said to him, *that it was a horrible Scandal to the whole Christian World, and made one doubt of the Truth of the Christian Religion, to see more Oppression and Cruelty in their Territories, than was to be found even in* Turkey. He says, *some Physicians in* Naples *are brought under the Scandal of Atheism: And it is certain, that in* Italy *Men of searching Understandings, who have no other Idea of the Christian Religion, but that which they see receiv'd among them, are very naturally tempted to disbelieve it quite; for they believing it all alike in gross, without distinction, and finding such notorious Cheats as appear in many Parts of their Religion, are, upon that, induced to disbelieve the Whole.* And it is an Observation of Dr. *GEDDES,* that *there are more People of no Religion in* Italy, *than in all the World besides,* (Tracts, Vol. 3.) *England* is also said by our High-Church Priests to abound with Atheists no less than *Italy.* But if there be such People among us, they are entirely owing to the Conduct of some of our Priests, who, I will be so bold as to affirm, are as *impudent* in their Pretences to Power and Authority, as the *Italian* Priests dare to be. This, tho' at first sight it may seem Matter of Admiration, that they should be so in such an inlightned Country as *England,* where so many understand right Reasoning and true Christianity; yet is natural enough, if it be consider'd, that it is the last

ſtruggle of Prieſts for *Popery* and *Slavery*: They contend for the moſt ridiculous Things, as neceſſary to Salvation; and by their Prevarications about Oaths, and Shiftings about Doctrines, according to their Intereſt, diſpoſe Men to make the ſame Inference, as the *Men of Quality*, and *Men of ſearching Underſtandings* do in *Italy*. And ſome among us may, perhaps, make that Atheiſtical Inference, conſidering how the Nation had been managed in the High-Church Reign of King *CHARLES* the Second, when *the Deſign*, according to the late Biſhop of *Sarum*, *ſeem'd to be to make us firſt Atheiſts, that we might more eaſily be Papiſts.*

Dr. HICKES tells us, that the Practices of the ſwearing Clergy, ſince the *Revolution*, who had preached Paſſive Obedience before, *have tempted looſe and unprincipled Men to turn Atheiſts*; and that thoſe Clergy have *ſet open the Floud-Gates to that Deluge of Atheiſm and Impiety, that* now *overflows the Nation.* And he cites another Author with Approbation, for ſaying, *This Change has made many ſober Men ſceptical, and gone farther towards eradicating all the Notions of a Deity, than all the Labours of Mr.* HOBBES. *I have been ready to ſuſpect, that Religion it ſelf was a Cheat; and others, of my own Knowledge, have the ſame Temptations to queſtion Religion it ſelf.*

Mr.

Mr. *Lesley* says, *The Carriage* of the Clergy *in* the *Revolution, has given greater Occasion to the* ENEMIES OF THE LORD TO BLASPHEME, *and turn'd more Men from the Church of* England, *to the Church of* Rome, *and* EVEN TO ATHEISM; *has overturn'd, ruin'd, divided, and dishonoured our Church more, than if that Persecution, which some feared or pretended, had fallen upon them.* He says, The Clergy *banter and mock God to his Face*; and that *Atheism is a smaller Sin than this, since it is better to have no God at all, than to set up One, to laugh at him*; and that *the greatest Danger to which we are now exposed, by the Defect of so many of our Clergy, is a Contempt of all Religion, which is now spread over the Land, in a manner unheard of in former Ages.*

Lastly, The late Bishop of *Sarum* tells us, that *since his Conversation* with *Wilmot*, Earl of *Rochester*, he *had had many Occasions to discourse with People tainted with wicked Principles*; and, says he, *I do affirm, that the greatest Prejudice those Persons have at Religion, at the Clergy, and at the Publick Worship of God, is this, That they say they see Clergyman take Oaths, and use all Prayers, both ordinary and extraordinary, for the Government, and yet in their Actings and Discourses, and of late in their Sermons, they shew visibly that they look another Way; from whence they conclude, that they*

are a mercenary ſort of People, without Conſcience.

2. Atheiſm being, in my Opinion, a moſt unnatural Thing, and a Crime, which, for its Madneſs as well as Guilt, ought to ſhut a Man out of Civil Society, I am not diſpoſed to lay it to any Man's Charge, tho' a vicious Perſon; much leſs to any ſober Man's without his open Profeſſion of it, or an evident Proof of it upon him. But if conſiſtently with Charity, we may ſuſpect any Men of Atheiſm, who deny themſelves to be Atheiſts, we may certainly ſuſpect ſuch Prieſts, who live viciouſly; who play with Oaths; who, tho' ſwearing to the Government, are *Jacobites* in their Hearts, (as Dr. *Hickes* ſays, I hope falſely, *the main Body of the Clergy, God be thanked,* are;) who are uncharitable in their Cenſures, and Perſecutors; who defend plain Abſurdities; who diſpute againſt the Reaſonableneſs of Reaſon; who contend for human Authority, that is, their own, in Matters of Religion; and argue for the Belief of unintelligible Propoſitions or Myſteries: (For Men of common Senſe and common Honeſty, can hardly be ſuppos'd to join real Belief and ſuch Things together:) And above all, ſuch Prieſts, who are conſtantly charging others with Atheiſm, (and thoſe oftentimes the moſt Learned, Beſt, and moſt Religious Men, as *Cudworth*, *Tillotſon*, and *Locke*;) upon whom we may juſtly return the Charge of Atheiſm, in the Words of a modern

modern Philoſopher; *How*, ſays he to a high Presbyterian Prieſt, *could you think me an Atheiſt, unleſs it were, becauſe finding your Doubts of the Deity more frequent than other Mens are, you are thereby the apter to fall upon that kind of Reproach? Wherein you are like Women of poor and evil Education, when they ſcold; amongſt whom the readieſt diſgraceful Word is* Whore. *Why not Thief, or any other ill Name, but becauſe when they remember themſelves, they think that Reproach the likelieſt to be true?*

And as many Prieſts give ſuch Cauſe of ſuſpicion, ſo I would fain know what Mr. LESLIE muſt eſteem the Prieſts of our Church to be, when he ſays, *That the Parliament cannot make an Oath which the Clergy will not take?* And whether many of our Clergy muſt not be eſteemed *Atheiſts*, according to the Saying of the late Biſhop of *Worceſter*, *It was a great Providence of God, that ſo many of the Clergy refuſed the Oaths* to the Government, *leſt People ſhould think there was no ſuch Thing as Religion, and incline to Atheiſm?* And laſtly, what can be thought of the Reverend Author of the *Tale of a Tub*, a known High Prieſt; or of the Majority of a Lower Houſe of Convocation, who, in their *Repreſentation of the preſent State of Religion, with regard to the late exceſſive Growth of Infidelity, Hereſy, and Profaneneſs*, fell upon the truly religious (tho' erroneous) Books of Mr. *Whiſton* and others,

but passed over the *Tale of the Tub*, a Book of a reverend Brother; tho' that Book was the sole open Attack that had been made upon Christianity since the *Revolution*, except the *Oracles of Reason*; and was not inferior in Banter and Malice to the Attacks of CELSUS, or JULIAN, or PORPHYRY, or LUCIAN? And what can we think of the Majority of another Convocation, which a worthy Member spoke to in these Words, *With what Face or Conscience, Mr. Prolocutor, can we offer to complain of the Licentiousness taken by Lay Writers, and yet connive at the like Offences given by the Ministers of our Church: I doubt greater Offences? For if all the ill Books against Religion, Scripture, &c. were here packed up together, I would undertake to pick out the worst of them, by pointing at those written by Clergymen, even of the most prophane Drollery, as well as the most serious Heresy?* So that upon the whole, the High-Church Priests seem to me to derive a mighty Benefit from Atheism. They have it chiefly among themselves, and protect one another in it; and thereby have the Profit of Atheism, arising from taking false Oaths, and from doing many Things without Scruple of Conscience; as also the Pleasure, as some of them esteem it, (See Dr. ATTERBURY's Sermon on BENNET's Funeral) arising from the Practice of Vice. And at the same time they themselves stand clear of the Imputation of Atheism, and brand those they

do

do not like with it, who are oftentimes the beſt Men and beſt Chriſtians.

P. S. The Author of this Paper having received two very modeſt and religious, though anonymous Letters, which take Offence at an Expreſſion in the *Independent Whig*, N°. XXXVIII. about godly Sorrow; returns for Anſwer, That *Sorrow for our Sins* is not there oppoſed, but *Mechanic Sorrow*, and ſuch as proceeds from wrong Cauſes; and the Author only ſuppoſes that ſuch enthuſiaſtick People, as he has before mentioned, knew not the true Principles of Repentance, which he himſelf has deſcribed.

In fine, as to *godly Sorrow*, *Sorrow for Sin*; I know it to be ſo much a religious Duty, that I know there can be no Religion without it.

NUMBER XLVI.

Wedneſday, November 30. 1720.

No PRIESTS *inſtituted by the* Chriſtian Religion.

I Will, in this Paper, ſhew, that there are no Prieſts or Sacrificers in the Goſpel Diſpenſation, in any other Senſe, than as every Chriſtian may be called ſo, as he offers up to God the Sacrifices of Praiſes and Thankſgivings, and a pure and contrite Heart; and, in this Reſpect, St. *Peter* calls all Chriſtians, *a ſpiritual Houſe, an Holy Prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices, a choſen Generation, a Royal Prieſthood, an Holy Nation, a Peculiar People, God's Heritage*, or, more properly, God's Clergy.

It is undoubtedly true, that all Power, Superiority, or Diſtinction amongſt Men, muſt be derived either from the poſitive Inſtitutions of God, or the Conſent and Agreement

ment of one another; and therefore, whoever demands any Authority over others, their Goods or Poſſeſſions, muſt ſupport his Pretences by ſuch Proof as the Nature and Importance of the Claim requires; and it muſt be very glaring and undeniable, when it is levelled at the temporal and eternal Happineſs of all Mankind.

It is a ſevere Circumſtance, which attends thoſe, who oppoſe receiv'd Opinions, that they muſt not only contend againſt popular Prejudices, and long imbibed Notions, againſt the Intereſts and Paſſions of great Numbers of artful and combining Men, but in moſt Countries againſt the Weight and Force of Publick Authority. The labouring Oar too will always lie upon you: You muſt diſprove what has no Proof to ſupport it, and bring Clouds of Arguments to maintain Propoſitions that are really ſelf-evident; a bare Poſſibility that you may be miſtaken, ſhall be deemed a full Conviction; and ſometimes the cleareſt Demonſtration on your Side, ſhall be called only carnal and human Knowledge, not to be uſed about Spiritual Things; and even when the irrefragable Strength of your Reaſoning forces Conſent, you will have no Thanks for your Pains, but will be eſteemed officious and factious, and be ſaid *quieta movere*, if by Chance you ſhould eſcape the Cenſure of promoting the Cauſe of Deiſm or Atheiſm.

However,

However, these Claims in the Popish and Popishly affected Clergy are so enormous, the Consequences of them so fatal to Christianity, and the Arguments pretended to be brought from Reason and Authority for their Support, so weak and contemptible; the whole Design and Current of the Gospel being directly against them; that I shall do my utmost totally to demolish and throw down the tottering Building, and shew it has no Foundation in common Sense or Scripture.

No Proposition can be more evident, than that before any positive Institution, every Man must have been his own Priest, and alone must have offered up his own Prayers and Thanksgivings; but when God Almighty instituted the *Jewish* Dispensation, which consisted of numerous Rites, Ceremonies, and Sacrifices, he also appointed Persons to officiate and execute these Duties for the People as well as for themselves, who were called Priests or Sacrificers, with particular Salaries or Dues annex'd to their Office, and they were to be only chosen out of one Tribe.

Accordingly in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, *chap.* v. *v.* 1. and *chap.* viii. *v.* 3. a High Priest is defined *as one taken up from amongst Men, and ordained for Men in Things pertaining to God, that he may offer Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins.* So that the Business of the Priesthood was for expiating Sin, and reconciling Men to God, by offering Gifts and Sacrifices: And the Apostle adds, *verse* the 4th,

That

That no Man could take this Honour to himself, but he which was called of God as was Aaron, whose Commission was couched in the plainest and most express Words imaginable, and the Peoples Duty and Obedience were prescrib'd even to the minutest Circumstance.

As the *Jewish* Rites and Ceremonies were almost endless, and consisted of so many minute Particulars, that it was next to impossible not to commit some Breaches of their Law, therefore God appointed Atonement to be made for the lesser Transgressions of it, by Gifts and Offerings, and the Persons aforesaid to make those Offerings; but for the greater Sins, such as Idolatry, Perjury, Murder, Adultery, breaking their Sabbath, *&c.* no Sin-Offerings or expiatory Sacrifices were allowed; and for this Reason the Apostle, *chap.* vii. *v.* 18, 19. argues, *there is verily a Disannulment of the Commandment going before, for the Weakness and Unprofitableness thereof; for the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in a better Hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

He adds, *chap.* ix. *v.* 9. *That Gifts and Sacrifices could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience.* And *chap.* x. *v.* 4. *That it is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sins.* And *v.* 6, 8. *That in Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices for Sins, God has no Pleasure*; and he argues from thence, *chap.* v.

v.

v. 4, 10. and *chap.* vii. from the 11th *v.* to the 19th, a Neceſſity *that another Prieſt ſhould ariſe after the Order of Melchiſedeck, which was an higher Order, and that he ſhould be perfect (being to become Author of eternal Salvation to all them who obey him) for if Perfection was in the Levitical Prieſthood (under which the People received the Law) what need was there that another Prieſt ſhould ariſe after the Order of Melchiſedeck, and not after the Order of Aaron; for the Prieſthood being changed, there is made a Neceſſity of the Change alſo of the Law.*

And then he obſerves many Differences between our Saviour's and the *Jewiſh* Prieſthood.

1. *That this Prieſt was not made after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an endleſs Life.*

2. *That he was made a Prieſt, not without an Oath, which the Jewiſh Prieſts were not,* v. 20, 21.

3. *That they were many Prieſts, becauſe they were not ſuffer'd to continue, by reaſon of Death; but this Man, becauſe he continueth, hath an unchangeable Prieſthood: Wherefore he is able to ſave them to the utmoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them,* v. 23, 24, 25.

4. *That the Law maketh Men High Prieſts, which have Infirmity; but ſuch a High Prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners, and made higher than*

the

the Heavens, who needeth not daily to offer up Sacrifices, first for his own Sins and then for the People; for this he did once, when he offer'd up himself, v. 26, 27, 28.

5. *That he obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much he is Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises; for if the Covenant had been faultless, then should no Place have been sought for the second; for finding fault with them, saith the Lord, I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts, and they shall not teach every Man his Neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the greatest to the least; for I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and Iniquities I will remember no more; in that he saith, by a New Covenant, he hath made the first Old, and that which decayeth and waxeth Old, is ready to vanish away,* chap viii. ver. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13. *and* chap. x. ver. 16, 17.

6. In *chap.* ix. the Apostle compares the Rites and bloody Sacrifices of the Law, and shews how far inferior they are to the Blood and Sacrifice of Christ, *who not by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own Blood, enter'd at once into the holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us; for if the Blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the Unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh, how much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit*

rit offer'd himself, without Blot, to God, to purge your Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God? ver. 12, 13, 14.

7. In *chap.* 10. he shews the Weakness of the Law-Sacrifices; *which being offer'd up Year by Year continually, could not make the Comers thereto perfect, for then they would have ceased to have been offer'd, because that the Worshippers, once purged, should have had no more Conscience of Sins.* Ver. 1, 2, *Then said he, Lo I come to do thy Will, O God: He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second; by the which Will we are sanctified, through the Offering of Jesus Christ, once for all. Every Priest standing ministring and offering the same Sacrifices, which can never take away Sins; but this Man, after he offered one Sacrifice for Sins, for ever sat down at the Right Hand of God; for by one Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*; that is, those who obey his Commands, *v.* 9, 10, 11, 12, 14. And in *v.* 18. he tells them, *Where Remission of Sins is, there is no more Offerings for Sins.*

In the rest of the Chapter, the Apostle exhorts the *Hebrews*, whom he calls his Brethren, to *have the Boldness to enter in with him into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus; and having a High Priest over the House of God, to draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of Faith, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water, and to hold fast the Profession*

ſession of our Faith, without wavering; and to conſider one another, to provoke unto Love and to good Works; not forſaking the aſſembling our ſelves together, as the Manner of ſome is; but exhorting one another, and ſo much the more as ye ſee the Day approaching. And he enforces his Argument, by telling them, that *if we ſin wilfully after the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins.*

Now in all this Epiſtle, where this Matter is ſo fully and at large explained, (as well as in many other Parts of Scripture where the *Jewiſh* Prieſthood, Rites and Ceremonies are plainly aboliſhed) there is not one Word or Hint given of any other to be eſtabliſh'd upon the Ruins of it. In all the Chapters I have quoted, no Prieſt, Sacrificer, Prophet, Mediator, Interceſſor, Reconciler, Benedictor, Ambaſſador, or Spiritual Prince, is once mentioned, but Jeſus Chriſt alone; though one might have expected to have met with him, or to have heard of him here, if there was to have been any ſuch Perſon in Nature. On the contrary, the Apoſtle himſelf addreſſes to the *Hebrews* as his Equals, and claims no Right, Privilege, or Superiority over them; talks to them always in the Plural Number; nor does he, in the modern Phraſe, ſay, *Pray ye, &c.* but joins himſelf with them in every Act of Love and Duty.

If this was the Caſe of the *Hebrews*, who were Parties to the *Horeb* Contract, by which God became their Temporal King; and conſequently, they became bound, and Subjects to all the Laws of *Moſes*; the Argument is much ſtronger in behalf of the *Gentiles*, who were never any way concerned in the *Jewiſh* Prieſthood, Rites and Ceremonies; and there muſt be therefore a very plain and poſitive Inſtitution and Eſtabliſhment found out in Scripture, before they can be ſubjected to it.

NUMBER XLVII.

Wedneſday, December 7. 1720.

All Prieſtly Power *inconſiſtent with the* Goſpel, *and renounced by it.*

I HAVE fully ſhewn, in my laſt Paper, that as there is but one Sacrifice in the Chriſtian Religion, ſo there is but one Sacrificer or Prieſt, who, as our Church declares in the *Communion-Service*, made one Oblation of himſelf, and once offer'd up a full, perfect, ſufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the whole World; and agreeably to this Declaration, in the 13*th* Article, ſhe calls the Sacrifices of the Popiſh Prieſts, *dangerous Deceits*, and *blaſphemous Fables*.

I cannot with my beſt Enquiry find out, that in the whole Chriſtian Religion, there are any new Rites and Ceremonies appointed, or any Offices erected; nor in the *Goſ-*

pels, *Acts* or *Epiſtles*, does any thing like an Inſtitution occur, except that of *Deacons*; which Office is now quite laid aſide, unleſs it may be ſaid to be revived by Virtue of the Act of Queen *Elizabeth*, which appoints Overſeers of the Poor: for as to the modern Eccleſiaſtical Deacon, he has no Reſemblance to the Scripture Officer, *who was appointed to ſerve Tables, upon Complaint of the* Grecian *Widows, who were neglected in the daily Miniſtration*; which the Apoſtles were not at Leiſure to attend, becauſe *of the preaching of the Word*, and therefore directed the Congregation to chooſe others, whoſe Buſineſs it ſhould be. *Acts* chap. vi.

I ſhall therefore enquire how the Popiſh World came to be bleſſed with ſuch a long Train of ſpiritual Equipage; and ſee what can be found in the Scriptures, to warrant or countenance their preſent Pretenſions. In order to it, I ſhall obſerve, that Promulgation is of the Eſſence of a Law, which cannot be without Plainneſs and Perſpicuity: It muſt not be expreſs'd in doubtful and equivocal Terms: It muſt not depend upon critical Learning, or different Readings; nor receive its Explanation from the myſterious Gibberiſh, and unintelligible Jargon of the Schools; but ought to be ſuch, as a plain, open, ſimple-hearted, ſincere Man may eaſily diſcover, amidſt the numerous and contradictory Schemes of the Eccleſiaſticks.

Weak and corrupt Men may, thro' Ignorance or Design, frame and enact Laws obscure and unintelligible; but the Almighty cannot intend to mislead his Creatures, or want proper Words to express his Meaning: Even such human Laws as enact Penalties, or restrain the natural Liberty of Mankind, are always construed strictly, and extended no farther than the Letter expressly warrants; and 'tis much more reasonable it should be so understood in divine Laws, upon which the Temporal and Eternal Happiness of all the World depends; not only because of the Importance of the Subject, but as there can be no unwary Omission, or Defect, in Words chosen by the Holy Ghost: We may therefore be very sure, that whatever is not expressed in Scripture, plain and clear to common Understandings, was not intended for our Instruction, or can become a Duty.

With our Eyes thus cleared up, we will view those Texts and Parts of Holy Writ, brought together to support this unweildy Fabrick. And here, for some Time, I must beg leave of my Reader, to stand amazed, and be at a Loss, which most to admire, the Stupidity and Acquiescence of the Popish and popishly affected Laity, or the daring Insolence and Impiety of their Ecclesiasticks; that without Reason, or the Appearance of Reason, without Scripture, or the Colour of Scripture, but directly in Defiance of them

both, they could be able to form ſo compleat an Empire over the Bodies and Minds of the greateſt Part of *Chriſtendom*; rob them of their Goods and Poſſeſſions, and make them Inſtruments of their own Ruin, hug their Chains, and mortally hate, murther, or ruin every one who would ſet them free.

But before I enter upon a particular Diſquiſition of the Texts produced, I would firſt enquire what Benefit can accrue to Chriſtianity, by ſuch Powers in the Chriſtian Clergy. A *Roman* Judge is honourably mentioned by *Cicero*, for always asking *cui bono* an alledged Action was done; by which he could make ſome Judgment whether it was done or not, and who did it. The ſame is a reaſonable Proceeding in this Caſe; for tho' it is no Objection to the Truth of what God has ſaid, that it is not agreeable to the Sentiments of weak Men; yet whilſt it remains a Queſtion, whether God ſaid it or not, there cannot be a ſtronger Way of arguing uſed, than to ſhew that it is unworthy of the divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, who can ſay nothing which is trifling and impertinent, or make any Ordinances uſeleſs or miſchievous to his Creatures.

Nothing can come from God, but what is godlike; and therefore, when any Number of Men combining together, dare tell me any thing in his Name, of no uſe to Religion or Virtue, and yet of apparent Advantage to themſelves or their Order, I ſhall always be-

believe it to be an Invention of their own, forged to gratify their Ambition and Avarice, and ſhall ever vindicate the Almighty from the imputed Calumny.

Now of what uſe is it to Religion and Virtue, that the Clergy ſhould always make one another? Whether the Impoſition of Hands be eſteemed barely a Ceremony, to denote a Perſon appointed to an Office, or be the Appointment it ſelf? Or whether he be choſen by laying on of Hands, or by any other Ceremony? Will the ſame Perſon, with the ſame Qualifications, be a better Man, better Chriſtian, or abler Divine, if he receives his Orders in a direct Line from the Apoſtles, thorough the Canal of a Popiſh, High-Church, or Presbyterian Prieſthood, or if only from the Civil Magiſtrate, or Voluntary Societies? Or is it poſſible to believe, that whilſt he is adminiſtring the Offices of Religion, and doing the Duties of the Goſpel, the devout Chriſtian People ſhall looſe the Effects of their Piety, and the Benefit of Chriſt's Promiſes, for the Defect of any Circumſtance, or any Omiſſion or Superfluity in his Adoption, which they could neither prevent nor know? Sure we have not ſo learn'd Chriſt.

Can we ſuppoſe that Almighty God ſhould make ſuch an Eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, as muſt deſtroy Chriſtianity it ſelf; and put it under the ſole Guidance and Direction of a Society of Men, who will have a perpe-

tual Intereſt to overturn or pervert it, and ever did ſo when they had Power?

What can be ſuggeſted more abſurd, than that the good God ſhould ſend his Son from Heaven, to teach Virtue and Goodneſs to Men, to manumit and ſet them free from the Superſtitions of the *Jews*, and the Idolatries of the *Gentiles*; who, whilſt upon Earth, ſhould not only diſclaim all Power and Dominion himſelf, but ſuffer an ignominious Death, to make Mankind happy; and yet ſubject them to a Yoke, the moſt arbitrary and tyrannical in the World, without Redreſs, without Remedy; where the Governours have conſtant Temptations and Motives to oppreſs, and the Governed no Means to reſiſt or oppoſe? For no leſs than this are the Popiſh and High-Church Demands upon us, and the inevitable Conſequences of their wild and wicked Hypotheſis.

If they are an Order of Men appointed directly by God, and have the Government of the Church by divine Right in all Things, which relate to Spirituals, (that is, in all Things wherein their own Intereſt is concern'd:) If they are to be ſole Judges of their own Powers, and what Doctrines they are to teach; that the People are to receive them implicitly, and to ſubmit to and be concluded by their Determinations, and if no human Authority muſt controul them; which I think thoſe I write againſt all claim, (tho' ſcarce two of them agree in whoſe Hands,

or

or in what Part of the Clergy, theſe Powers are veſted) then 'tis plain, they are poſſeſſed of the moſt deſpotick, unlimited, and uncontroulable Sovereignty in the Univerſe, and which of Neceſſity muſt prove, and actually ever has proved, the moſt Cruel and Tyrannical in the Exerciſe.

But if they have not this Power, they can have none at all, but what the Civil Magiſtrate or Voluntary Societies truſt them with; for, what is the Name of a Power, which every Man is a Judge whether he will ſubmit to, or not? Or how can that be ſaid to be Divine, which the Civil Magiſtrate can controul at his Pleaſure? There can be no Medium in Nature betwixt another's judging for me, and my judging for my ſelf: If another is to judge for me, I muſt ſubmit to his Determinations, let them be ever ſo abſurd, monſtrous or wicked; but if I have a Right to re-examine them, they can amount to no more than Advice, and my own Judgment alone muſt determine me.

As I think I have amply proved that 'tis inconſiſtent with the Goodneſs of God to truſt the Powers ſo claimed with the Popiſh Clergy; ſo in my two next Papers, I will as fully prove that, in Fact, he has given them no Authority at all.

Indeed, to do them Right, the Popiſh Prieſts do not pretend to offer any direct Texts to their Purpoſe, expreſſing particularly the Powers given them, and the Perſons

in

in whom they are to be veſted; as might be reaſonably expected in a Caſe ſo nearly affecting the Liberties of all Mankind; and was actually done in the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, where every Circumſtance relating to their Worſhip and the Prieſts Office was minutely deſcribed; but inſtead thereof, they pick up ſcatter'd and disjointed Sentences, and ſet them together by the Ears, to try what they can get by the Scuffle: They argue from Types, Antitypes, Parables, Metaphors, Allegories, Alluſions, Inferences, Patterns, Reſemblances, Figures and Shadows, and by ſuch Means can fetch every Thing out of every Thing.

The Bible is a Miſcellanious Book, from whence craz'd or deſigning Men, by joining or disjoining; by various Readings, corrupt or ignorant Tranſlations; by far fetch'd Interpretations, and putting different Meanings upon Words in Scripture from what they ſignify in any other Parts of Language; by trifling and knaviſh Diſtinctions, metaphyſical Subtilties, no Definitions, but ſhifting the Significations of Words as they have Occaſion; by References to ancient Cuſtoms, and Twenty other Theological Syſtems of Reaſoning, may always fetch Materials to ſerve their looſe or wicked Purpoſes; as we actually find an Hundred different, and many of them almoſt contradictory, Religions are pretended to be deduced from that Book; and if the Prieſts were let alone, they would

find

find a Thouſand more, and burn for them all, (I mean other People.) But if Men would be contented to judge of the Goſpel Style, by the ſame Rule as they do of other Writings: If they could be perſwaded that God Almighty, when he condeſcends to make uſe of human Language, intends to be underſtood, and conſequently uſes Words in their common Acceptation; that when he deſigned to reveal his Will to Babes and Sucklings, (that is, to the Ignorant and Unlearned) he did not chuſe to do it in Riddles, to make Way for Interpreters, and that the Popiſh Clergy might have a Pretence for picking the Laity's Pockets; then I affirm, that the Bible is the plaineſt, openeſt, moſt moral, ſignificant and intelligible Book in the World, in all Things which can be the Duty of a Man to know; and in no Part of it more ſo, than in the preſent Diſpute, which has been rendered ſo perplex'd and intricate by Craft and Artifice: And I undertake in my two next Papers to make this out.

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NUMBER XLVIII.

Wedneſday, December 14. 1720.

The ſame Subject continu'd.

THERE is nothing in the Four Goſpels to authorize or countenance the Diſtinction of Eccleſiaſtical and Civil; for as our Saviour renounced all worldly Power himſelf, ſo he gave none. He neither uſed, nor allowed the Uſe of Force and Violence, to coerce and conquer Subjects to his Kingdom, which he declared was not of this World. As the Religion he taught was not to conſiſt of outward Actions and Ceremonies, like the Worſhip of the *Gentiles*, but was to reſide in the Mind, ſo he choſe proper Means to attain his End: He knew the Sword might make Hypocrites and Slaves, but never Converts; therefore he inſtructed his Apoſtles to win Mens Affection by Love and Gentleneſs, to allure them by Example, and convince them by

by the Reaſonableneſs of his Precepts, and he enabled them to prove their Miſſion by Wonders and Miracles; all which are directly contrary to the Proceedings of *Mahomet*, whoſe Aim was Temporal Dominion, and his Religion Impoſture; and conſequently Violence was neceſſary to propagate Both: for Abſurdity can no Way be ſupported but by Tyranny; but Truth can ever defend it ſelf, and deſires nothing but a fair Examination, a free Hearing and equal Favour.

He takes every Occaſion to caution his Apoſtles againſt ſpiritual Pride, and claiming Superiority over others, or one another: The Powers he gave them were of another Kind, ſuch as were proper to overcome the Prejudices of the innocent and well-meaning, tho' miſled People; and to confound the Malice and Subtilty of the governing Prieſthood, (*viz.*) *A Power againſt unclean Spirits, and to caſt them out; to heal all manner of Sickneſs, and all manner of Diſeaſes; and to raiſe the Dead.* Sure no Clergyman pretends to theſe Powers.

He bids them provide neither Silver, nor Gold, nor Braſs, in their Pockets; nor Skrip for their Journey; neither Two Coats, nor Shoes, nor Staves: Much leſs Coaches. I preſume no Clergyman deſires theſe Powers.

He orders them *when they come into any Houſe, to ſalute it; and if they do not receive them, and hear their Words, to depart from that*

Houſe,

Houſe, and ſhake off the Duſt of their Feet. The Popiſh Clergy are for ſetting Fire to ſuch an Houſe, (as they did lately to ſeveral) and for burning and damning every one within it.

The Apoſtles Commiſſion was *to preach Chriſt to all Nations*, in *Matthew*; and in *Mark, to go into all the World, and to preach him to every Creature.* The Popiſh Prieſt ſtays at Home, and preaches himſelf only, to his own Pariſh for Money.

Thoſe who *believed in the Apoſtles, and were baptized, had the Power of caſting out Devils in Chriſt's Name, and ſpeaking with new Tongues: They could take up Serpents; no deadly Thing they drank could hurt them; they laid Hands upon the Sick, and they recovered.* Thoſe who believe in the Popiſh Prieſt are the beſt Friends the Devil has; and inſtead of caſting him out, for the moſt Part bring him in: They can ſpeak Senſe with no Tongue; nor dare venture on any Poiſon, but what proceeds from Gluttony and Drunkenneſs, with which they give their Votaries Diſeaſes, inſtead of recovering them.

The Apoſtles were *to be Witneſſes of all which they had heard or ſeen ſaid or done by our Saviour*; and who elſe could be ſo? But the Popiſh Prieſt has no other Means of knowing Chriſt, than any Layman of equal Abilities and equal Application; nor can have any greater Motive or Inducement to preach him, except his Hire; which, as it

firſt ſuborn'd his Predeceſſors to betray his Perſon, and take away his Life, ſo it has ever ſince been the Occaſion of Crucifying him a-new, by miſrepreſenting his Doctrines, and making them ſubſervient to worldly Ambition and Intereſt; which is ſo univerſal, that no *Engliſhman* can ſet his Foot out of his own Country, but he ſees the Clergy perverting the Scripture, and abuſing the People.

Our Saviour himſelf appointed the Seventy Diſciples, whom *he ſent before him Two by Two, in every Place where he intended himſelf to go*, and gave them Powers almoſt equal to the Powers of the Apoſtles, (*viz.*) *to heal the Sick, to tread on Serpents and Scorpions, and over all the Power of the Enemy, and that nothing ſhould hurt them*; but he was ſo far from giving any worldly Authority, that he tells them, *he ſends them forth as Lambs amongſt Wolves; that they ſhould carry nothing with them, but whatſoever Houſe they came into, they ſhould ſay, Peace to that Houſe, and ſhould eat and drink ſuch Things as the People gave them; and whatever City they came into, they ſhould eat ſuch Things as were ſet before them, for the Labourer is worthy of his Hire*; (here it ſeems the People were to judge what Wages and Hire they deſerve) *and if any Perſons refuſed to receive them, they were to go into the Streets, and ſhake off the Duſt of their Feet at them*; which was all the Excommunication they were directed to uſe, and was nothing

thing elſe but to leave them in their Sins, and preach to them no longer.

Whatever is meant by the figurative and abſtruſe Texts of binding and looſing, remitting and retaining Sins, is evidently confined to thoſe it is ſpoken to, and ſeems to have Relation to the other World alone.

Now I would be glad to know by what Rules of Conſtruction can the Powers, now claimed by any Sett of Clergy in the World, be brought from theſe Texts; or in what Senſe can any Clergyman be ſaid to be a Succeſſor of the Apoſtles, more than every Layman of equal Qualifications.

If our Saviour had intended to have conveyed down any Powers to any Man, or Set of Men whatſoever, it is impoſſible to believe but he would have expreſſed himſelf in the fulleſt and moſt ſignificant Words; and left no doubt behind him what thoſe Powers were, and to whom they belonged. No Statute enacted amongſt weak Mortals is penned ſo looſly: What Lawyer in *Weſtminſter-Hall* could have found out Sovereign Power in the Precept, *Feed my Sheep?* Or in our Saviour's Promiſe to aſſiſt the Apoſtles, and perhaps all Chriſtians in general, in theſe Words, *I will be with you to the End of the World?*

The Prieſts of *Delphos* uttering, for the moſt part, their Oracles in ſorry and balderdaſh Poetry, gave Riſe to a waggiſh Jeſt amongſt the Ancients, *viz.* that *Homer* could write

write better Verſes than *Apollo*, who inſpired him. But ſure no one among Chriſtians will be ſo profane, as to give Occaſion to the Suggeſtion, that the Attorney-General can draw up a clearer and more intelligible Commiſſion than the Apoſtles.

But tho' there is nothing in the Goſpels to juſtify or excuſe the prieſtly Demands upon the Laity, yet there are many Texts expreſly againſt them, in which our Saviour diſclaimed all Authority over Men, and forbids his Diſciples and Followers aſſuming Superiority over their Brethren, or cenſuring, judging, or uſing any one ill, for not receiving, or for oppoſing them.

In *Luke* the xiith, *v.* 13. a Man deſires of our Saviour to ſpeak to his Brother to divide his Inheritance with him; and his Anſwer is, *Who made me a Judge, or a Divider over you.*

In *John*, chap. xii. *v.* 47, 48. our Saviour declares, *If any Man hears his Words, and believes not*, that *he will not judge him; for he came not to judge the World, but to ſave the World.* And in the next Verſe, leaves him to the Judgment of the Father, and tells him what will be his Doom.

In *John*, chap. xviii. *v.* 36. he was brought before *Pilate* for ſpeaking Treaſon againſt *Cæſar*, and claiming the Temporal Kingdom of *Judæa*; and he took that Occaſion to renounce all earthly Sovereignty, by declaring, *His Kingdom was not of this World,*

and gave his Reaſon for it; which ſo ſatisfy'd the *Roman* Governour, ever jealous of his Maſter's Authority, that he pronounced him innocent, and would gladly have releaſed him, if the *Jewiſh Prieſts* would have ſuffered it.

In *Matthew*, chap. vii. *v.* 1, 2, 3. he ſays to his Diſciples, *Judge not, leſt ye be judged; for with what Judgment ye judge ye ſhall be judged, and what Meaſure ye meet ſhall be meaſured to you again*, &c.

In *Luke*, chap. ix. *v.* 53. *James* and *John* deſired of him, that they might command Fire from Heaven to puniſh the *Samaritans* for not receiving him; which he was ſo far from conſenting to, that *he reproves them for it*; and tells them, *Ye know not what Spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to deſtroy the World, but to ſave the World.*

In the ſame Chapter, *John* ſaid to him, *Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out Devils in thy Name, and we forbid him, becauſe he followeth not with us. And Jeſus ſaid, Forbid him not, for he that is not againſt us, is for us.* A plain Precept for Chriſtians to tolerate one another.

Thro' the whole xviiith Chapter of *Matthew*, our Saviour exhorts his Diſciples to be humble, and to forgive Offences. And in the 15th Verſe tells them, *If thy Brother treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone; but if he will not hear thee, take one or two more with thee*, &c.

and

and if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church, or Congregation: *And if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee like a Heathen or Publican*; that is, have no more to do with him. And in the two Verſes after, he tells them what a Church is, *viz. When two or three are gathered together in my Name, I will be in the midſt of them*; and his Preſence, methinks, ſhould be effectual to conſtitute a compleat Church, tho' a Parſon is not one of the Company.

Indeed the whole New Teſtament is a Leſſon of Humility, Humanity and Morality; the Sermon upon the Mount is nothing elſe; and we every where find conſtant Precepts and Cautions againſt Pride and Domination.

In the xxiiid of *Matthew*, our Saviour ſpake to the Multitude, and to his Diſciples, bidding them *not to be called Maſter, for one is your Maſter, even Chriſt, all ye are Brethren; but he that is greateſt amongſt you, ſhall be your Servant; and whoever does exalt himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall be exalted.*

In *Luke*, chap. xx. *v.* 46. he warns his Diſciples to *beware of the* Scribes, *who deſire to walk in long Robes, and love Greetings in the Markets, and the higheſt Seats in the Synagogues, and the chief Places at Feaſts*, (hear, O ye Popiſh Biſhops, Prieſts and Deacons!) who devour Widow's Houſes, *and for a Shew make long Prayers.*

In *Luke* xxii. *v.* 24, 25, 26. *There was a Strife amongſt the Apoſtles which ſhould be the greateſt. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, The Kings of the* Gentiles *exerciſe Authority over them; and they that exerciſe Authority upon them, are called Benefactors. But ye ſhall not be ſo; but he that is the greateſt amongſt you, let him be as the Younger; and he that is Chief, as he that does ſerve.* The ſame in *Matthew*, chap. xx. *v.* 25, 26, 27. And he enforces this Precept in Verſe 28. from his own Conduct, *viz. Even as the Son of Man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter.*

Our Saviour did not, like others, preach Doctrines to his Diſciples which he refuſed to practiſe, but teaches them Modeſty and Humility by his own Example: For in the 13th of *John* he *waſhes their Feet himſelf, and bids them waſh one another's.* How different is this from the proud Spirit of his pretended Succeſſors, who take Place of the Nobility and Gentry, and make the great Men of the Earth kiſs their Slippers; ſalute them upon the Knee, as if they were Gods below, or Sovereign Princes; nay more, ſet themſelves above the Crown it ſelf; for what is it elſe they mean after ſaying Grace, and in their Cups, by putting the Church (by which they mean Themſelves) before the King and Royal Family? We all know too well their Kindneſs for the People, (who are the Scriptural and Legal Church) to ſuſpect that they mean them.

No

Not many Years ſince, the conſtant Health amongſt them was, King, Queen, and Church; but now all the High Clergy are guilty of the ſame Crime for which Cardinal *Woolſey* ought to have loſt, and in all Likelihood would have loſt his Head, if he had not prevented it, as it is ſaid, by Self-Murther, *viz.* of ſetting themſelves above the Crown, and *viva voce* crying out, *Ego & Rex meus,* when they are in the Humour of owning him as ſuch.

I ſhall hereafter write a Paper on Purpoſe on this Subject; but in my next ſhall ſhew, that the *Acts* and *Epiſtles* no more favour their wild Pretenſions than the *Goſpels*.

NUMBER XLIX.

Wedneſday, December 21. 1720.

An Inquiry *into* Religious Eſtabliſhments, *with a further Confutation of the impious and abſurd Claims of* High Prieſts.

SO many are the various and contradictory Opinions and Reaſonings of Men, that no voluntary Society or Aſſembly can act, or long hold together, without eſtabliſhing certain Rules and Orders amongſt themſelves, regarding the Common Intereſts and Conduct of the Society, and appointing Perſons whoſe Duty it ſhall be to ſee thoſe Orders put in Execution; and if any Member does not think it lawful or expedient to ſubmit to the publick Regulations, they muſt have a Right to exclude him, or in other Words, to excom-

excommunicate him from their Body, if he does not chuſe to ſeparate himſelf.

If the Deſign of the Meeting is to worſhip God, to join in the ſame Prayers, and for Exhortation and Edification, (which Aſſembly is called a Church) there muſt be Time and Place appointed, when, and where they are to meet, and Perſons to prepare and keep in order all Things neceſſary for their meeting: There muſt be one, or more, appointed to read thoſe Prayers to the Congregation, in which they are to join; and to do all thoſe Offices, which can be performed only by ſingle Perſons; and if the Society would avoid the Loquacity and Interruption of ignorant and conceited Members, they muſt confine Exhortation to one, or to a few Perſons of approved Gravity and Wiſdom. There muſt be alſo ſome Means of conferring and agreeing together, to ſupport the common Expences of Buildings, Repairs, Utenſils, *&c.* and conſequently, there muſt be Debates, which cannot well be carried on without a Preſident, Chairman, or Prolocutor, to regulate them, collect their Voices, and pronounce their Reſolutions; without which Precautions they will be more likely to fight than pray.

If ſeveral of theſe Churches, reſiding at too great a Diſtance from one another to meet together, ſhould eſteem it their Duty or Advantage to join in the ſame Form of Worſhip, and unite in a common Intereſt to ſupport it, they muſt find out ſome Means of Commu-

nication, and contrive ſome Cement of their Union, otherwiſe they would ſoon ſeparate again: This may be done by chuſing Deputies to repreſent them, and concert common Meaſures, or by ſubmitting themſelves to the Conduct and Determinations of one or more Perſons, choſen by common Conſent, in all ſuch Matters as do not interfere with their Duty to God; and the Perſons ſo choſen can have no more Power, nor of longer Duration, than their Principals think fit to give them.

If theſe Churches think it their Duty or Intereſt to enlarge their Bottom, and make Converts, they cannot take a more effectual Method to do it, than to chooſe, appoint, or ordain diſcreet and honeſt Men, who are acquainted with their Way of Worſhip, their Ordinances, and the Reaſons of them, and ſend them forth to teach, perſuade, and convince others; to exhort them with Meekneſs and Love, (the likelieſt Way to gain them) and afterwards to preſide and watch over them, and thereby prevent their Straying and Apoſtatizing.

This was the Caſe in the Beginnings of Chriſtianity, before National Churches were eſtabliſhed, as well as the preſent Caſe of independent, voluntary Societies. The Apoſtles Commiſſion was, *To go into all the World, and preach Chriſt to every Creature.* Which was impoſſible for them to do in their own Perſons; and therefore as they made Converts,

verts, they exhorted them to convert others, as *Acts* viii. *v.* 1, 4. When the Apoſtles were left at *Jeruſalem, the Church was ſcattered abroad through all* Judæa *and* Samaria, *and thoſe who were ſcattered abroad preached the Word.* Acts xi. *v.* 13, 14. *They that were ſcattered abroad upon the Perſecution that aroſe about* Stephen, *travelled as far as* Phœnice *and* Cyprus, *and preached the Word to none but the* Jews *only; and ſome of them, when they were come to* Antioch, *ſpake unto the* Grecians, *preaching the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Chap. iv. *v.* 4. Peter *and* John *converted Five Thouſand. And* v. 31. *They were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and they ſpake the Word of God with Boldneſs.*

And they were all enabled to prove their Miſſion, by having the Power of working Miracles; for *Mark* xvi. *v.* 17, 18. theſe Signs were to follow thoſe who believed in Chriſt's Name. *They could caſt out Devils; they could ſpeak with new Tongues; they could take up Serpents; no deadly Thing could hurt them; they could lay their Hands on the Sick, and recover them.* John, *chap.* xxiv. *v.* 12. Our Saviour ſays to his Diſciples, *Whoever believeth in me, the Works that I do ſhall he do, and greater than theſe ſhall he do:* Which Gifts would have been unneceſſary, if they had been to have made no Uſe of them; and by Virtue of theſe general Powers given to all Chriſtians, *Philip* and *Stephen,* who were choſen by the Congregation to the menial Office of ſerving Tables,

Tables, preached, baptized, and did many Wonders and Miracles, *Acts, chap.* vi. *v.* 8. *chap.* viii. *v.* 7.

But beſides the common Right which every Man had to preach Chriſt, and propagate his Kingdom, the Apoſtles prevailed with particular Perſons to undertake it, and make it their Buſineſs, who were to aſſiſt and overſee the Brethren, as a Shepherd does his Sheep: Having the Gift of diſcerning Spirits, they knew who were fitteſt for the Employment, and who would engage in it without any ſiniſter Views; but 'tis plain, they gave no Gifts or Advantages to them above other Chriſtians. They could not give the Holy Ghoſt; which Power was confined to the Apoſtles alone, and, as far as appears, was beſtowed without Diſtinction upon all who believed and were baptized.

The Power of ſpeaking with Tongues, as is aboveſaid, was given to all Believers; which appears to be in Scripture, one conſtant and inſeparable Mark of having received the Holy Ghoſt.

In *Acts* the iid, *v.* 4. *The Holy Ghoſt fell on the Apoſtles, and they ſpake with Tongues.* In *Acts* x. *v.* 46. *While* Peter *ſpoke, the Holy Ghoſt fell on all who heard the Word, and the* Jews *were aſtoniſhed when they heard the* Gentiles *ſpeak with Tongues.* Chap. xix. *v.* 6. Paul *lays his Hands on certain Diſciples, and the Holy Ghoſt came on them, and they ſpake with Tongues, and propheſied.* *Acts* the xith. *v.* 15. *Peter*

Peter juſtifying himſelf to the *Jews*, for preaching to the *Gentiles*, ſays, *And as I began to ſpeak, the Holy Ghoſt fell on them as on us at the Beginning. Then remembred I the Word of the Lord, how that he ſaid*, John *indeed baptized with Water, but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt; for as much therefore as God gave them* (*viz.* thoſe who believed) *the like Gift as he did to us, who believed in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, what was I that I ſhould withſtand God?* So that here, from the Mouth of *Peter* himſelf, we have it, that the *Gentiles* who believed, had the ſame Gift as the Apoſtles. *Chap.* viii. *v.* 14. *When the Apoſtles at* Jeruſalem *had heard that the* Samaritans *had received the Word, they ſent to them* Peter *and* John, *who laid Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt*, which they had not received before, tho' they were baptized by *Philip*. In *chap.* ii. *v.* 38. *Peter* ſays to them of *Iſrael, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the Remiſſion of Sins, and ye ſhall receive the Holy Ghoſt*; and *v.* 41. *They gladly received the Word, and the ſame Day were added to them about Three Thouſand Souls, who muſt have all conſequently received the Holy Ghoſt.* Chap. viii. *v.* 8, 9. *Paul* ſpeaking of the *Gentiles*, ſays, *God which knoweth the Hearts, bear them Witneſs, giving them the Holy Ghoſt, even as he did unto us, and put no Difference between them and us, purifying their Hearts by Faith.*

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Therefore it appears plain to me, that all who believed, eſpecially by the Apoſtles Miniſtration, received the Holy Ghoſt, and could do Miracles; and conſequently, the Perſons aforeſaid, by whatever Names they are called, were not deſigned to be an Order of Men diſtinct from other Chriſtians, with different Powers and Privileges. They undertook a Burthen, not a Command. They were better and poorer than other People, not their Lords and Maſters; nor is there a Word in Scripture, whereby we can gueſs that they were intended to be Succeſſors to the Apoſtles, much leſs that the Succeſſorſhip was to continue to the End of the World; and 'tis evident in Fact, that there were no ſuch appointed, becauſe the Power of giving the Holy Ghoſt, and in Conſequence of doing Miracles, ſoon ceaſed in the Church.

With this View, let us now examine the *Acts* and *Epiſtles*, and ſee what there is which contradicts it.

Acts xiv. *v.* 23. Paul *and* Barnabas *ordained Elders in every City*; and *chap.* xx. *v.* 17. Paul *calls the Elders of the Church of* Epheſus *together*; and *v.* 28. tells them their Duty, (viz.) *Take heed therefore unto your ſelves, and to all the Flock, over the which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood.* Here, luckily, the Word *Epiſcopos* is tranſlated *Overſeer*, and not *Biſhop*, becauſe it is explained in the Text, to import

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no more than *to feed the Church of God*, that is, to aſſiſt them, to preach to them, to exhort them, to adviſe them, and give them good Examples; but all this implies no Juriſdiction, nor had the Apoſtles any to give.

Theſſalonians, chap. v. *v.* 12. *And we beſeech you, Brethren, to know them which labour amongſt you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you.* Here *Paul*, with all Humility, entreats the *Theſſalonians*, that they will know, that is, take Notice of, and hearken to, thoſe who labour for their Sakes, who watch over them, and admoniſh them to mend their Lives.

Epheſians, chap. iv. *v.* 7. 11. *Unto every one is given Grace, according to the Meaſure of the Gift of Chriſt; and he gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers*, and in the next Verſe tells for what (*viz.*) *for the perfecting of the Saints*, (that is, all the Faithful) *for the Work of the Miniſtry, and for the edifying the Body of Chriſt.*

Romans, chap. x. *v.* 14, 15. *How then ſhall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how ſhall they hear without a Preacher? And how ſhall they preach unleſs they be ſent?* This relates plainly to the Teaching of the Apoſtles, who were ſent to preach the Goſpel to the unconverted World, that otherwiſe could have

known

known nothing of it, and possibly in a larger Sense may be extended to all Christians, who had the Power as well as the Means to preach it, and consequently might be said to be sent to do it; but I should be glad to know, by what Skill in Chymistry it has been discover'd, or how it came to be guess'd, that the Clergy of the many Nations in *Europe*, as by Law severally established, were the Persons meant; or if only one sort of them, which that is; when 'tis plain, they have no other Means of knowing Christ than the Laity have, and for the most part can tell them no more than they knew before.

Hebrews, chap. xiii. *v.* 7. *Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose Faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation.* And, *v.* 17. *Obey*, by others translated, *be persuaded by, them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your Souls, as those who must give Account.* Here it seems the Editors of our *English* Bible do not think fit to stand to their Translations; for in the Margent, against the Words *Rule over you*, in both Verses, they have inserted the Word *Guides*, which does not give us altogether so frightful an Image.

The Word translated *Obey* in the last Verse, is explained by the Word *Remember* in the first; and the Reason given in the one is, *because you are to consider the End of their Conversation*; and in the other is, because *they watch*

watch for your Souls; ſo that the *Hebrews* were exhorted *to remember*, hearken to, *or be perſuaded by their Guides, who had ſpoke to them the Word of God, which was the End of their Converſation, and who watched for their Souls*: And, I think, all good Chriſtians ought to do ſo ſtill, when they know where to find them, and the Clergy have agreed amongſt themſelves who they are.

At the latter End of the ſecond Epiſtle to *Timothy*, in our Edition of the Bible, he is ſaid to be *the firſt Biſhop of* Epheſus; by which, we are to underſtand, if we pleaſe, that he was in poſſeſſion of the Authority and Dignity of a Modern Prelate; but the Text ſays no ſuch Matter: Indeed, *Paul*'s 1ſt Epiſtle, *chap.* i. *v.* 11. ſays, that *the Glorious Goſpel of Chriſt was committed to his Truſt*, that is, he was intruſted to preach it. And, v. 18. he *commits the ſame Charge to* Timothy: But in *chap.* iv. *v.* 12, 13. he tells him what he is to do, (*viz.*) he is *to be an Example to the Believers in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Faith, in Purity; and till he comes himſelf, he is to give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine*; and the reſt of the Epiſtle is ſpent in telling him what Doctrine he is to preach.

In his 2d Epiſtle, *Paul* ſays unto him, *And the Things thou haſt heard from me amongſt many Witneſſes, the ſame commit thou to faithful Men, who ſhall be able to teach others alſo*; which he expreſſes ſummarily before, in

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theſe Words, *Lay Hands ſuddenly on no Man*; a Ceremony always uſed amongſt the *Jews*, to denote a Perſon appointed for any Purpoſe, as well as on many other Occaſions; ſo that *Paul* himſelf knew, by Inſpiration, who was fit for his Charge, and *Timothy* was to make good Enquiry after *faithful* Men: But there is no Power here given *but to preach the Goſpel, and to employ others to do it*; which I have ſhewn every one was at liberty to do, tho' all had not an equal Call, or were equally qualified for it; and therefore it was certainly good Advice to endeavour to find out ſuch as were, and prevail upon them to undertake it.

In the Epiſtle to *Titus*, who it ſeems was another Biſhop, he is directed *to ſet in order the Things that are wanting*, (the Buſineſs amongſt us of Church-Wardens and Veſtry-Men) *and to ordain Elders in every City, as* Paul *had appointed him*; which alludes to private Directions before given, and proves nothing, but that *Paul* took the beſt Precautions and moſt prudent Meaſures to propagate Chriſtianity, by reducing his Converts in every City, into orderly, though voluntary Societies, by finding out and appointing diſcreet and honeſt Men to aſſiſt and ſuperintend the reſt; and it cannot be doubted but the People who knew him to be inſpired, would be adviſ'd by him, accept his Recommendations, and conſequently hearken to, truſt their Affairs, and be directed by the Wiſdom

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of Persons so powerfully recommended; which Respect and Deference has been always paid by every Sect that ever appeared in the World to their first Founders, and for the most part to their after Leaders too.

These are all the Texts that I can at present remember, which are usually brought to support the Priestly Claims, except such as plainly relate to our Saviour himself, or his Apostles, but if any others occur hereafter, I shall take Notice of them in proper Time.

But what has all this to do with a formal and solemn Institution, and established Form of Government, a Political Oeconomy, or in Ecclesiastical Language and Stile, a Spiritual Hierarchy?

What, must sovereign and independent Power, (without which, as I have shewn in my 48th Paper, there can be in this Case no Power at all) depend upon figurative Expressions, and Allusions to Seniority of Age, as *Elders*, to mean and low Professions, as *Guides*, *Shepherds*, *Pastors*, *Teachers*, *Overseers*, notably translated *Bishops*? Or upon the critical Knowledge of ancient Eastern Terms, of doubtful and disputed Significations, which would put it in the Power of the very few Men said to be skilled in the Oriental Tongues (which, for the most Part lick out all their Brains) to settle what Establishments or Religion they please.

The Prophets and Evangelists often speak after the Manner of the Eastern Nations,

which was for the moſt Part figurative; where, *for ever, to the End of the World*, and ſuch like Language, was frequently uſed to denote a long Space of Time; and therefore general Expreſſions in Scripture are not always to be taken ſtrictly; as *Covetouſneſs is the Root of* ALL *Evil: Swear not* AT ALL: *Children and Servants obey your Parents and Maſters in* ALL *things. Take no Care for to Morrow: Take no Thoughts for your Life, what you ſhall eat, what you ſhall drink, or what you ſhall put on: Whatever you ask of my Father in my Name, he will give it you. Submit your ſelves to one another: Ye younger be ſubject to the elder; yea be ſubject to one another: And there were many other Things which Jeſus did, the which if they ſhould be written, the whole World could not contain the Books*; and more than an hundred others of the ſame kind. When ſuch Paſſages occur, we muſt conſtrue them by the Rules of Eternal Righteouſneſs, the Reaſon of the Thing, and the general Bent of Scripture, and then we cannot miſtake their Meaning, but in ſuch Caſes as are of no Conſequence, whether we do or not.

Beſides, almoſt all Words vary their Meaning by Time, and every one of the leaſt reading, knows that there is ſcarce a Word in Nature, (except the proper Names of Perſons, Places, and Things) that is anſwer'd by any other in a different Language, ſo as to comprehend exactly the ſame Number of Ideas; nor is it pro-

probable that any two Persons of the same Nation ever used one such Word minutely to the same Purpose; but if they were ask'd to give an adequate Definition of what they meant by it, would differ in some Particular: therefore 'tis absurd to suppose that Mens Duty and Eternal Salvation should depend upon the nice Signification of single *Hebrew* and *Greek* Words; Languages so long since out of common Use, and dead.

The Almighty is too merciful to his Creatures to leave them at such Uncertainties, which is in effect to let them throw Cross and Pile for their Religion: When he makes an Establishment, and gives Laws to Mankind, he always expresses himself in a manner not to be misunderstood; so he did in the *Jewish* Dispensation, where there was no dispute about the Meaning of their Law; though there is nothing in Scripture to countenance these Pretensions, yet the Gospel almost every where forbids them, as I have partly shewn in my last Paper, and shall unanswerably make out hereafter, when I shall more fully consider the *Acts* and *Epistles*; and then I will shew that the Apostles themselves claim'd no Authority over other Christians, or any Power but of Perswasion. I shall endeavour to shew what is meant by Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and do undertake to prove, that the Clergy have no more Power from Scripture to administer them than Women and Laymen, and that nothing is meant

by Excommunication, but not keeping ill Company. I will shew too that the Clergy, in the first Ages of Christianity, were always chosen by the People, and lived upon their Alms, and by what Steps of Impiety and Forgery the *Popish* Priesthood came to be Lords of so great a Part of the Terrestrial Globe.

NUMBER I.

Saturday December 24. 1720.

Of the Three High-Churches *in* England.

HAVING in my former Papers given some Account of the Scripture-Church; I shall, in this, give an Account of the *Three High-Churches in England*, which are very different from it. And tho' in order to this, I shall be oblig'd to take in a good deal of Matter, and reveal many *High-Church* and *Jacobite Secrets*; yet, I hope to give the Town a clear Notion of them,

them, in the Compaſs of one Paper. I ſhall, *Firſt*, ſtate what the *true Church of England* is; and then deſcribe the *Three High-Churches of England*, ſhewing how they differ from one another, and from the *true Church of England*.

I. *Firſt*, What the *true Church of England* is. All Churches by Law eſtabliſh'd, are Creatures of that State, where they are ſo eſtabliſh'd. For whatever is eſtabliſh'd, neceſſarily depends on the Legiſlature, which can and does repeal and enact whatever it thinks fit, and always calls its preſent Conſtitution in Religion, *The Church by Law eſtabliſh'd*. The Church of *England* therefore by Law eſtabliſh'd, is whatever the Legiſlature has enacted, and continues in Force, in relation to Religion, together with whatever is *enjoyned* by the Authority of the King, or is determin'd by the proper Judicatories, acting by the Authority, of and in Subordination to, the Legiſlature. Thus the Act of Parliament requiring the Subſcription of the *Thirty-nine Articles*; the Acts of Uniformity, and the Act of Toleration; the King's Injunctions, the Canons of Convocation confirm'd by the King; the Sentences of the Delegates, and the Determinations of the Houſe of Lords, conſtitute the Church of *England*: And the Members thereof are good and true Members, who conform their Belief and Practice to the ſeveral Particulars aforeſaid: As on the other ſide, they fall

ſhort of being good and true Members, who recede from any Particular eſtabliſh'd and ſettled as aforeſaid. Nor can thoſe be truly ſaid to agree with and conform to a Church, who do not agree with and conform to it in the Senſe intended by the Makers of the ſeveral Conſtitutions of that Church. This laſt is ſo plain a Truth in it ſelf, and ſo manifeſtly imply'd in taking all Oaths, and making Subſcriptions and Declarations, that it would have been needleſs to have obſerv'd it, had it not been for the Equivocation and Jeſuitiſm of ſo many of our Prieſts, who think they may take Oaths, and make ſubſcriptions, in Senſes contrary to, and different from the Intention of the Impoſers, and yet be good, and true, and perfect Members of the Church.

II. Now the High-Churches, which differ from this Eſtabliſhment, are *Three* in Number; which I ſhall rank under the Names of the moſt remarkable Leaders in them. 1. Dr. *Bungey*'s High Church. 2. Mr. *Leſley*'s High-Church. 3. And Dr. *Brett*'s High-Church. The Two laſt are in an open Separation from one another, as well as from the true Church of *England*. But Dr. *Bungey*'s High-Church has as yet made no Separation from the *True Church*. He and his People are only Schiſmaticks in the Church, (as were thoſe upon whom St. PAUL charges *Schiſm*, when they were met together in the ſame Church, 1 *Cor.* xi. 18.) being as his preſent Grace

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of *Canterbury* describes some High-Church Priests, *a new Sort of Disciplinarians risen up among our selves, who seem to comply with the Government of the Church, as others do with that of the State; not out of Conscience of their Duty, or any love they bear to it, but because they cannot keep their Preferments without it: They hate our Constitution, and revile all such as stand up in good earnest for it; and yet, for all that, go on to Subscribe and Rail*; which Passage, from so great an Authority, cannot be too often quoted.

But to proceed to the Description of these Three High-Churches, in their Order.

1. Dr. *Bungey*'s High-Church stands distinguish'd from the *True Church of England*; by their *Arminian* Doctrines, contrary to our old Orthodox *Calvinistical* Articles; by their Enmity to the Act of Toleration, and to the Principles on which it is grounded; by their claiming an Independent Power in Priests to make Laws, and govern the Church; which is contrary to the Laws of *England*, that place the Power of making Church-Laws in other Hands, and particularly contrary to the Oath of Supremacy, which makes his Majesty Supreme Head of the Church; by teaching the Doctrines of Hereditary Right and Passive Obedience, contrary to the Judgment and Practice of the Legislature at and since the Revolution, and to the *Determination* of the House of Lords, on the Impeachment of Dr. SACHEVEREL, and

their *Condemnation* of the *Oxford Decree*; and by a Spirit of Faction againſt the preſent Eſtabliſhment in State, and againſt his Majeſty's Meaſures; by Rebellion and Perjury, by Uncharitableneſs to all Foreign, and more eſpecially to Domeſtick Proteſtants; and by an implacable Fury and Malice towards all Diſſenters among us, beſides *Jews* and *Papiſts*: In which they act contrary to the known loyal Principles of our Church; to its Opinion of all Foreign Proteſtant Churches, which it eſteems true Churches; to its Principles, which all tend to preſerve Liberty and Property; and to its known charitable and peaceable Temper, and Regard to tender Conſciences.

2. The Second High-Church is Mr. Lesley's High-Church. At the Revolution ſeveral Biſhops, who were deprived by Act of Parliament, for not taking the Oaths to the Government, made an open Separation from the Church of *England*; and pretended, that they and their Adherents were the Church, charging thoſe who fill'd their Sees with being Uſurpers, and ſetting up Altar againſt Altar; and alſo charging them and their Adherents, together with all the other Biſhops, Clergy and Laity, who join'd in the ſame Communion with the uſurping Biſhops, with *Schiſm*. Hereby alſo they diſtinguiſh themſelves in Principles from the Church of *England*; which, being a legal Eſtabliſhment, aſſerts to the Legiſlature, which has a Right to preſerve their Peace, a Right to deprive

Biſhops for Crimes againſt Law. They do not indeed ſo much diſtinguiſh themſelves in Principles from Dr. *Bungey*'s Church, as they do from the true Church of *England*: For the Doctor's Church equally contends with Mr. *Leſley*'s Church againſt the Parliament's Right to deprive Biſhops, and calls it Uſurpation on the Rights of the Church; but is for Submiſſion to ſuch uſurp'd Exerciſe of Power; and contends, Schiſm to be on the Side of thoſe, who ſeparate on a Principle of defending the Rights of the Church, againſt an Uſurpation of thoſe Rights.

This new ſeparate Church agrees with Dr. *Bungey*'s Church, in the other Principles before-mention'd, which diſtinguiſh the Doctor's Church from the true Church of *England*. But in Point of Honeſty, or Adherence to thoſe Principles, it greatly differs from the Doctor's Church, which goes on to *Subſcribe*, and ſwear, and practiſe contrary to what they do ſubſcribe and ſwear; Mr. *Leſley*'s High Church honeſtly practiſing in ſeveral Reſpects according to its villanous Principles.

3. Proceed we now to Dr. *Brett*'s High-Church. Soon after King GEORGE's Acceſſion to the Crown, the Biſhops of the laſt mention'd High-Church did all, except one, aſſemble in a Synod, where they reſolv'd upon making *Four Alterations* in the Common Prayer Book, *viz.* 1. *To mix Water with the Wine in the Sacrament.* 2. *A Prayer for the Dead.*

Dead. 3. A *Prayer for the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, upon the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament.* 4. *An Oblatory Prayer; which goes upon the Ground, that the Euchariſt is a proper Sacrifice.* All which Dr *Brett* is not only an Advocate for, as an Author, but (perhaps) as *Titular* Archbiſhop of *Canterbury* exerciſed his Authority in enjoining. This has ſplit the laſt High-Church into two Churches; Dr. *Brett* and his Followers adhering to the Biſhops, or Church Governors of their Church, in Behalf of Wine and Water, *&c.* and Mr. *Leſley* and his Followers adhering to one Biſhop only, in Behalf of *Wine*, *&c.* contrary to the Determination of their own Biſhops, and all their own Principles, about the Authority of Biſhops and Clergy.

To render my Account of our ſeveral High-Churches of *England* more compleat; I ſhall, by Way of Supplement, obſerve, that there is a Diſtinction in Dr. *Bungey*'s Church; and his High-Church may be divided into two High-Churches. Some of his High-Church are Swearers to the Government, and ſay the Church Prayers for his Majeſty King GEORGE and his Family, continuing at the ſame Time diſaffected to him, and Enemies to his Legal Title. Others of the Doctor's High-Church are *Non-ſwearers*; and, tho' they come to the Church, diſown joining with the *Swearers* in the Prayers for the King and his Family; whoſe Practice the profound Mr. DODWELL has defended

fended in a Book, (whoſe Title I ſhall, upon Memory, venture to give the Reader) intitled, *A further Proſpect of the Caſe in View; Proving, that it is our Duty to be preſent at ſinful Prayers, made ſinful by the Miſtake of Fallible Superiors, who have a Right of impoſing Prayers.* So that, I think, the High-Churches of *England* may not improperly be reckon'd *Four* in Number; which may be juſtly diſtinguiſh'd by Things, as well as by Names of Men, after the following Manner.

I. The Swearing and Forſwearing High-Church.

II. The Non-ſwearing High-Church, that contends for being preſent at the *ſinful Prayers* of the Church.

III. The Non-ſwearing Wine and Water Church.

IV. The Non-ſwearing No Water Church.

NUMBER LI.

Wednesday, December 28. 1720.

An Analogy *between* ancient Heatheniſm *and* modern Prieſteraft.

AS Extremes meet in a Point, and Corruption in Terreſtrial Bodies is the next State from Perfection; ſo all the Commands and Denunciations of Heaven have not been able to keep the Chriſtian Prieſthood, in moſt Countries, from running Headlong into the Superſtitions and Follies of the *Gentile* Idolaters. By a ſtrange ſort of Fatality, they have jump'd in the ſame Thoughts, and play'd over and over again, the ſame Tricks; inſomuch, that if we but make ſmall Allowances for the conſtant Alterations of Time, and ſuch as muſt neceſſarily reſult from different Languages and Faſhions, the preſent *Romiſh* Churches might be eaſily miſtaken for Heathen Temples, and the

the Services performed in them for *Pagan* Worſhip.

The Devil, as ſubtle and cunning as he is repreſented to be, with all the Aſſiſtance of corrupt Prieſts, has not been able to find out a new Device, but has ever danced the Hay, and made his Rounds within the ſame Circle. The ſame Arts and Stratagems have been always made uſe of to ſeduce and delude Mankind; the ſame Advantages taken of their Weakneſſes and Paſſions, and in all Times equally applied to deſtroy true Religion, advance the Prieſthood, and make the honeſt and induſtrious, but unthinking, Part of the World, the Prey and Property of Hypocrites and Impoſtors.

The All-powerful, All-wiſe, and All-merciful God himſelf, is too often repreſented like the Heathen Deities, to be revengeful, cruel, capricious, impotent, vain, fond of Commendation, and Flattery; and, in effect, ſubject to all the other Paſſions and Imperfections of the weakeſt Men: His Being, which is boundleſs as Extenſion, and which the whole World cannot contain, is pretended to be confined to ſingle Structures, and narrow Edifices built with Hands; nay, to Parts of thoſe Edifices; where he is ſuppoſed to be pleaſed and gratified, like frail Mortals, with coſtly Furniture, gilded Roofs, engraven and poliſhed Marble, fine Carving, and other curious, tho' baubling Workmanſhip of Mechanicks and Artificers.

I confeſs I am not wiſe enough to find out any eſſential Difference between the preſent and the old *Roman* Worſhip; they both dedicate their Temples to dead Men and Women, whom the Papiſts call Saints, and the Pagans called Demi-Gods and Goddeſſes: The latter had Forms of *Hocus-Pocus*, which they called Conſecrations; and were intended to conjure and call down their Deities to inhabit perſonally their Temples, their Images and Idols: The Popiſh Prieſts conſecrate their Churches for the ſame Purpoſe, *viz.* to obtain the more immediate Preſence of the Deity: Like the old *Romans* too, they erect Altars in their Temples, where they worſhip Saints with Supplications, Tears, Grimaces, antick and diſtorted Faces and Geſtures, Muſick, and Ceremonies, and tender Offerings and Oblations to them; and, like the others, often make Proceſſions, Cavalcades, and Shews in their Honour; and ſometimes go in Pilgrimages to them to obtain their Favour.

The Popiſh Prieſts have prophaned the plain and ſimple Direction of our Saviour to his Diſciples, for commemorating the Benefits we have received by his Death, by turning it into an old *Roman* Sacrifice: Amongſt them, the Pipers and Harpers were the Forerunners of the Shew; and before the modern Sacrifice, the Organs ſtrike up a Tune: There the Prieſts went up to the Altar in a white Garment free from Spots, (being an Emblem of Innocence;) in new *Rome* the Prieſt wears

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a white Surplice: The Heathen Prieſt turned about to the *Eaſt*, being the Region of the Riſing Sun, and bowed; the Popiſh Prieſt does the ſame: The Horns of the Beaſt ſacrificed were mark'd with Gold, and his Blood receiv'd in Golden and Silver Veſſels; here the pretended Chriſtian Sacrifice of the real Body and Blood of Chriſt, is poured into the ſame coſtly Cups, or laid upon as rich Plates and Diſhes: The old *Roman* Altar was raiſed, by ſeveral Steps, above the Floor of their Temples; ſo is the preſent. The Prieſt, amongſt them, made a crooked Line with his Knife from the Head to the Tail of the Victim; the Popiſh Prieſt plays Tricks of *Legerdemain* with his Fingers over the Elements: Laſtly, When the Beaſt was conſecrated and killed, the Heathen Prieſts regaled themſelves upon what was left, after their Gods were ſerved; the *Romiſh* Prieſts make it prophane for any Layman to drink of the conſecrated Wine, or for any one even to eat the Bread but the Communicants.

The old *Romans* had different Orders of Prieſts, with different and diſtinct Offices and Revenues, *viz.* the *High Prieſt*, the *Luperci*, the *Augurs*, the *Haruſpices*, the *Pontifices*, the *Flamines*, *Salii*, *Feciales*, *Sodales*, the *Duumviri*, *Decemviri*, *Quindecemviri*, the Keepers of the *Sybilline* Books, the *Corybantes*, &c. The preſent *Romans* (beſides the ſeveral Sorts which are in Uſe and Faſhion amongſt us) have a *Pope*, *Cardinals*, *Dominicans*,

nicans, Franciſcans, Jeſuits, Carmelites, Benedictines, Mendicants, Capuchins, Ciſtertians, Obſervantines, Auguſtines, Servites, &c. In Imitation alſo of the Veſtal Virgins, in old *Rome*, they have founded ſeveral Orders of Nuns, who take a Vow of Chaſtity, for the Breach of which they are immured, as the others were burned alive: And as they had a Right to deliver from the Hands of Juſtice, any Malefactors they caſually met in their Walks; ſo the preſent *Romiſh* Prieſts claim and exerciſe an equal Right to protect all Criminals who can fly to them for Protection, which is borrowed from that of the old *Roman* Aſyla.

The old *Romans* had their *Dies faſtos & nefaſtos*, their Faſts and Feaſts, their *Sacrificia*, their *Epulas*, their *Ferias*, in Honour of their Gods and Demi-Gods; the preſent *Romans* alſo make Diſtinctions of Days a great Part of their Religion; they too have their *Dies faſtos & nefaſtos*, their ſtated Faſts and Feaſts in Honour of their Saints, or to commemorate and condole paſt Misfortunes, or rejoice over ſignal Succeſſes; and ſome of their Feaſts, and particularly their Carnivals, exceed in Lewdneſs and Prodigality, the Bacchanalia of the Ancients.

The Heathens had their *Deos Tutelares*, to whom the Defence of certain Countries were committed; and their *Deos Preſides*, who had the Safe-guard of particular Cities; the Papiſts have Saints, who ſupply the ſame Offices:

Offices; Artificers and Profeſſions have alſo their particular Saints who preſide over them; Scholars have their Saint *Nicholas*, and Saint *Gregory*; Painters, Saint *Luke*; as Soldiers and Lovers had formerly their *Mars*, and *Venus*: Diſeaſes too have their Saints to cure them; as the Pox, Saint *Roque*; the falling Evil, Saint *Cornelius*; the Tooth Ach, Saint *Apollin*: And even Beaſts and Cattle have their's; Saint *Loy* is the Horſeleech, and Saint *Anthony* the Swineherd.

As the Heathen Prieſts would ſuffer none to come into their Sanctuaries but themſelves; neither will the *Popiſh* Prieſts permit any Layman to come within the Rails of the Altar, and profane with unhallowed Feet that Holy Place. As the Ancients obliged all who were initiated into their Myſteries to confeſs, under the moſt ſevere Denunciations, all the Secrets of their paſt Lives, by which Means they were ſo much in their Power, that they never afterwards durſt blob out what they ſaw, nor give the leaſt Oppoſition to their Deſigns; ſo the *Romiſh* Prieſts truſt their Myſteries only to the *vere Adepti*, and have made the ſame uſe of Confeſſion, (the loſs of which is ſorely lamented by others;) for they oblige, upon the Penalty of Damnation, all their Votaries to confeſs not only their private Sins, but ſecret Thoughts, as well as every Thing elſe they know of other Peoples, which may any way regard the Intereſts of their Order;

and ſo have Poſſeſſion and faſt hold of all Families, and become acquainted with all the Deſigns, which may ever thwart their Pride; and conſequently have ſecured their own Domination, and the Peoples Miſery, beyond almoſt a poſſibility of Redreſs.

Laſtly, As the Heathen Prieſts ſacrificed Goats to *Bacchus*, for browſing his Vines; and Men to *Pluto* and *Proſerpina*, and other angry Deities, to appeaſe their Wrath, and avert Evils from themſelves; ſo the Popiſh Prieſts ſacrifice and devote their Enemies, under the Names of *Hereticks* and *Schiſmaticks*, to the infernal Fiend: And as thoſe Idolaters were allowed to know when was the moſt proper Time to make their Sacrifices to their Deities, and what Victims would be moſt acceptable to them, as being preſumed to underſtand beſt the Minds of their provoked Gods; ſo the preſent Ones are in Poſſeſſion of the ſole Judgment of what is Hereſy, and of ſacrificing by that Means whom they pleaſe to their Ambition and Revenge; which equally ſubjects the unhappy Laity to them.

They have alſo imitated the Heathens in making every human Foible and Imbecility, as well as every common and uncommon Appearance in Nature, contribute to their Intereſts; which ſhall be the Subject of my next Paper.

NUMBER LII.

Saturday, December 31. 1720.

Prieſtly Empire founded on the Weakneſſes of Human Nature.

THERE is not a living Creature in the Univerſe, which has not ſome innate Weakneſs, or original Imbecility co-eval to its Being; that is, ſome Inclinations or Diſguſts, ſome peculiar Deſires or Fears, which render it an eaſy Prey to other Animals, who, from their conſtitutional Sagacity or Experience, know how to take Advantage of this Infirmity; of which it would be needleſs, as well as endleſs, to enumerate Particulars; my Purpoſe being only to ſhew, that all the Dignity of human Nature, and the Superiority which Almighty

God has given to Man above other Beings, has not exempted him from this Imperfection; which probably was left in his Fabrick, to put him in mind of his Mortality, humble his Pride, and excite his Diligence.

The peculiar Foible of Mankind, is Superſtition, or an intrinſick and pannick Fear of inviſible and unknown Beings. It is obvious to every one, that there muſt be Cauſes in Nature for all the Good or Evil which does, or ever can happen to us; and it is impoſſible for any Man ſo far to diveſt himſelf of all Concern for his own Happineſs, as not to be ſollicitous to know what thoſe Cauſes are; and ſince, for the moſt part, they are ſo hidden and out of ſight, that we cannot perceive or diſcover them by our own Endeavours, we conclude them to be immaterial, and in their own Nature inviſible; and are, for the moſt part, ready to take their Accounts, who have the Dexterity to make us believe that they know more of the Matter than we do, and that they will not deceive us.

To this Ignorance and Credulity joined together, we are beholden for the moſt grievous Frauds and Impoſitions, which ever did, or do yet oppreſs Mankind, and interrupt their Happineſs, *viz.* for the Revelations and Viſions of Enthuſiaſts, for all the forged Religions in the World, and the Abuſes

buſes and Corruptions of the true One; as well as all the idle and fantaſtical Stories of Conjurers and Witches, of Spirits, Apparitions, Fairies, Dæmons and Hobgoblins, Fortune-Tellers, Aſtrologers, and the Belief in Dreams, Portents, Omens, Prognoſticks, and the ſeveral ſorts of Divinations, which, more or leſs, diſturb the greateſt Part of the World, and have made them the Dupes and Property of Knaves and Impoſtors in all Ages.

Every thing in the Univerſe is in conſtant Motion, and where-ever we move we are ſurrounded with Bodies, every one of which muſt, in a certain Degree, operate upon themſelves and us; and it cannot be otherwiſe, that in the Variety of Actions and Events, which happen in all Nature, but ſome muſt appear very extraordinary to thoſe who know not their true Cauſes. Men naturally admire what they cannot apprehend, and ſeem to do ſome ſort of Credit to their Underſtandings, in believing whatever is out of their Reach, to be Supernatural.

From hence perpetual Advantages have been given to, and Occaſions taken by the Heathen and Popiſh Prieſts, to circumvent and oppreſs the credulous and unwary Vulgar; what fraudulent Uſes have been made of Eclipſes, Meteors, epidemical Plagues, Inundations, great Thunder and Lightnings, and other amazing Prodigies, and ſeeming

Menaces of Nature? What jugling Tricks have been or may be acted with Glaſſes, ſpeaking Trumpets, Ventriloquies, Ecchoes, Phoſphorus, magick Lanthorns, *&c.* in the ignorant Parts of the World? The *Americans* were made to believe, that Paper and Letters were Spirits, which conveyed Mens Thoughts from one to another; and a dancing Mare was, not many Years ſince, burnt for a Witch in the Inquiſition in *Portugal.*

Nature works by a Thouſand Ways imperceptible to us: The Loadſtone draws Iron to it, Gold Quickſilver; the ſenſitive Plant ſhrinks from the Touch; ſome ſorts of Vegetables attract one another and twine together; others grow farther apart; the treading upon the Torpedo affects, and gives raging Pains to our whole Bodies; Turkey-Cocks and Pheaſants fly at a red Rag; a Rattle Snake, by a ſort of magical Power in his Eyes (as it is ſaid) will force a Squirrel to run into his Mouth; Muſick will cure the Bite of a *Tarantula*; the Frights and Longings of Women with Child, will ſtamp Impreſſions upon the Babes within them; People, in their Sleep, will walk ſecurely over Precipices, and the Ridges of Houſes, where they durſt not venture, when awake; Lightning will melt a Sword without hurting the Scabbard.

There

There is ſomething within us, which we all feel, that baffles and gets the better of our beſt Reaſonings and Philoſophy; and this ſhews it ſelf in Love, in Fear, in Hatred, Ambition, and almoſt every Act of the Mind; but in nothing ſo much as in Superſtition: Sometimes we find a ſecret Pannick, and at other times a ſtrange and uncommon Energy, or Feeling of a mighty Power within us; and not being able to account, by any Conduct of Reaſon, or other Cauſes in Nature, for ſuch Perceptions, are eaſily perſuaded to believe them to be Supernatural: And from hence great Philoſophers, Poets, Legiſlators, famous Conquerors, and often Madmen, have been thought in many Ages, by themſelves as well as others, to be inſpired; and even Diſtempers, ſuch as Apoplexies, Epilepſies, Prophetick Fits and Trances have been deemed miraculous.

Nothing ſtrikes ſo ſtrongly upon our Senſes, as what cauſes Surprize and Admiration: There are very few Men, who are not affected with unuſual Sounds and Voices, the Groans of others in Miſery, the Solemnity of a Coronation, or any publick Shew, the Pomp of a Funeral, the Farce of a Proceſſion, the Power of Eloquence, the Charms of Poetry, the rich and ſplendid Equipage of great Men, or the ſolemn Phiz and Mien of an Enthuſiaſt. Whoever therefore can find out the Secret of hitting luckily upon this

Foible and native Imbecility in Mankind, may govern them and lead them as he pleaſes. And herein has conſiſted the greateſt Skill and Succeſs of crafty Prieſts in all Ages; They have made uſe of this Power to turn us and wind us to all their Purpoſes, and have built and founded moſt of their Superſtitions upon it; and conſequently, have ever adapted their Worſhip rather to catch our Paſſions, than convince our Minds, and enlighten our Underſtandings; all which is directly contrary to the Spirit of Chriſtianity and the Precepts of our Saviour, as ſhall be fully ſhewn in the next Paper.

For this Reaſon the Heathens built their Temples in Groves, in ſolitary, dark and deſart Receſſes, by or over Caverns, Grottoes, or in the midſt of ecchoing and reſounding Rocks; that the hideous and diſmal Aſpect, and often hollow and hoarſe bellowing of ſuch Places, might ſtrike a ſolemn Awe and religious Horror into their Votaries, and ſometimes help their Imaginations to hear Voices; and ſee Forms, and ſo intimidate and prepare them for any Stories and Impreſſions, which they ſhould think it their Intereſt to make.

The Popiſh Prieſts have admirably well aped theſe their Predeceſſors; by building their Churches dark and diſmal, with figured and painted Windows, to let in a falſe and glim-

glimmering Light; arched and contrived in ſuch manner, as to reſound the Voice hollow and ſhrill; with many private Apartments, Cœmetaries for their Saints, proud Inſcriptions, whiſpering Places, ſecret Chappels for Confeſſions, ſaying Maſſes, Dirges, Penances, *&c.* Like the Heathens too, they build their Temples ſolemn and magnificent, in antick and uncommon Figures, adorn them with Silver and Gold, rich Carpets, curious Statues, and Images ſtuck about with Jewels; and their Prieſts appear in gaudy Veſtments, and fantaſtical Robes and Caps, and perform their Worſhip with Muſick and affected Ceremonies; all which Pageantry and Farce is calculated, and intended, to act upon the Paſſions, attract the Eyes, amuſe, lull and ſuſpend the Underſtanding, and draw Admiration and Reverence to thoſe who preſide in theſe haughty Fabricks, and this pompous Adoration: Their Bells too, which call the People together, are contrived to emit ſuch Sounds, as affect the Minds of moſt People, with a ſort of ſuperſtitious Melancholly.

Indeed, as the Romiſh Prieſts are more numerous, have vaſtly larger Revenues, and more Leiſure, ſo they have greatly improved upon the Heathens in this Art of deceiving; inſomuch, that there is ſcarce an Imperfection or Error of human Nature, which is not adopted into their Scheme, and made ſubſervient

ſervient to their Intereſt. Men of ſprightly Genius and Courage are caught by their Ambition, are highly honoured, flattered, and raiſed up by their general Voice to the higheſt Dignities, and then are indulged in all their Paſſions, and gratified with Confeſſors, who are not only to overlook or pardon, but aſſiſt them in their vicious Pleaſures; by which Arts thoſe great Talents, inſtead of being nobly employ'd to free Mankind from ſacerdotal Uſurpations, are meanly perverted to ſupport and aggrandize the monkiſh Empire.

Men of violent and impetuous Tempers are ſuitably employ'd to execute their Tyrannical Deſigns, and to take Vengeance of their Enemies; and the Debauched and Wicked are made to buy their Peace of Heaven, by giving Money and Lands to the Prieſts; but none contribute ſo much to advance their Syſtem, as Viſionaries and Enthuſiaſts: There are, in all Countries, Multitudes of People, whom Ignorance, Pride, Conceit, ill Habit of Body, melancholly and ſplenetick Tempers, unfortunate Circumſtances, cauſeleſs and ſecret Fears, and a pannick Diſpoſition of Mind, have prepared to be the Objects, as well as Inſtruments of Deluſion, and they have been ever made uſe of accordingly.

Some of theſe are thruſt or decoyed into religious Houſes, or perſuaded to lead retired,

retired, recluſe and auſtere Lives, and to torture and puniſh themſelves with Whippings, Penances, Faſting, and to walk Barefoot, to aſtoniſh the gaping Multitude, and thereby gain Reverence to the Prieſthood, for their fancied Holineſs; whilſt the governing Eccleſiaſticks feaſt and riot in delicious Banquets, ride in State with Coaches and Six, attended by numerous Servants in coſtly Liveries; and Earth and Sea is ranſacked, and Heaven it ſelf profaned, to maintain their Luxury and Pride.

Such amongſt them as are diſpoſed to hear Voices and ſee Forms, ſhall hear and ſee enough of thoſe, which are real ones, and afterwards be made uſe of to divulge them; and in order to it, their Sanctity ſhall be proclaimed abroad, and their mad and incoherent Speeches be called Revelations, heavenly Diſpenſations, and incomprehenſible Myſteries. Such crazed and fanatical Men and Women have been the Founders of moſt of the Colleges, Monaſteries, and Nunneries of the *Romiſh* Church, (to ſay nothing of others) and their Follies and Madneſs been the Support of the Papal Dominion.

But this artificial Devotion, this mechanick Religion, has nothing to do with Chriſtianity; which is natural Religion reſtored and improved, and conſiſts in Virtue and Morality, and in being uſeful and beneficent to one another, as I ſhall ſhew in my next Paper.

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The Prophets have taught us the ſame Leſſon: The Firſt Chapter of *Iſaiah* fully ſhews, that Religion does not conſiſt *in Sacrifices, in Burnt-offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beaſts, in the Blood of Bullocks, and of Lambs, and of He-Goats, in vain Oblations, Incenſe, New Moons, Sabbaths, and Calling of Aſſemblies, in appointed Feaſts, or many Prayers*; but in doing Good to Mankind. The Prophet ſums up our Duty in theſe Words, *Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well, ſeek Judgment, relieve the Oppreſſed, judge the Fatherleſs, plead for the Widow*; for, as another Prophet ſays, *What doth the Lord require of thee, O Man, but to do juſtly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Micah, *chap.* vi. *v.* 8.

NUMBER LIII.

Wednesday, January 4. 1720.

In what only true Religion *consists.*

I Have undertaken in this Paper to prove, what, methinks, should want no Proof; namely, that the All powerful God is not a whimsical and humorous Being, that governs his Creatures by Caprice, and loads them with arbitrary and useless Burthens, which can serve no good Purpose in Nature.

The Almighty is infinitely happy in his own Perfections, and cannot receive Pleasure from such Things or Actions, as only the weakest Men are fond of, and the wisest contemn. He is not capable, like Mortals, of being ruffled by Accidents, or surprized by Disappointments. Wisdom, Goodness and Felicity, are essential to his Being; and consequently,

ſequently, he could have no View in creating Mankind, but their own Happineſs: for we can neither add to his, nor take away from it.

It is abſurd therefore to ſuppoſe, that there can be any Merit in bare Opinions and abſtruſe Speculations; or in the Performance of indifferent and uſeleſs Actions; or, indeed, that any thing can be Part of true Religion, but what has a Tendency to make Men virtuous and happy. The Father of Mercies will never perplex our Minds, or burthen our Bodies, with any thing that ſignifies nothing.

Moſes indeed gave to the *Jews a carnal Law, a Law of Bondage; a Yoke, which neither they, nor their Poſterity could bear; Statutes which were not good, and Judgments by which they could not live.* But theſe were given them *for the Hardneſs of their Hearts, and as Puniſhments for their manifold Sins and Iniquities.* And beſides, they were only to laſt for a Time, and afterwards give way to a ſimple, pure, and perfect Law, to a ſpiritual, innocent, and undefiled Religion; free from their own fond Superſtitions, and the ſtale Idolatries of the *Gentiles*; not loaded either with Prieſts, Sacrifices, or Ceremonies; a Religion which was to conſiſt *in Spirit and in Truth*, and intended to make Men wiſer and better.

It

It ſeems plain to me, that there is but one Article of Faith in all this Religion, and that Eſſential to the very Being of it; namely, that *Jeſus is the Meſſiah*: Without this preliminary Acknowledgment, his Miſſion could not have been owned, nor his Precepts obey'd; which are nothing elſe but Exhortations to Love, and Directions for ſocial Happineſs; and which he has enforced, by annexing eternal Rewards to the Obſervance of them. Hitherto Virtue had expected its Reward in this Life; but our Saviour gave new Sanctions to it, by *bringing Life and Immortality to Light*.

There is no Propoſition in all Scripture more evidently revealed, or laid down in more poſitive and expreſs Terms, than that the Confeſſion of this Truth, was the Baſis and Support of Chriſtianity, the *unum magnum* requiſite to be believed: Every thing elſe is practical Duty, and Belief is no farther concern'd in it, than as it produces Practice. For before we can think our ſelves obliged by a Precept, we muſt be ſatisfied of its Reaſonableneſs, or of the Legiſlator's Authority.

The World had been ſo long corrupted by Superſtition, and deluded and abuſed by ſelfiſh and lying Prieſts, who taught Wickedneſs for Virtue, and Nonſenſe for Philoſophy, and placed Devotion in fooliſh Ceremonies and Sacrifices, and in ridiculous

Cringes,

Cringes, antick Veſtments and Grimaces, that nothing leſs than a Divine Legiſlator, with the Power of Miracles, could reſtore Men to their Senſes and to Natural Religion. The ſole Article therefore that our Saviour made neceſſary to be believed was, That he came from God, and acted by the Authority of God: Then every one would ſee the Impoſſibility that he could deceive or miſlead Men, and conſequently would take his Word for every thing elſe in the Senſe he underſtood it.

And this Proceeding was agreeable to eternal Reaſon; namely, to make nothing neceſſary in Belief, which was not neceſſary to Practice; for what Purpoſe could be ſerved in obliging Men to believe, or rather to ſay they believed, myſterious and unintelligible Propoſitions? Such Articles are only the Watch-words of a Party, and can never be the Objects of real Aſſent; for no Man can be ſaid to believe what he does not underſtand, and has not ſuitable Ideas of, as far as his Belief goes. We muſt underſtand the Meaning of every Term in a Propoſition, before we can aſſent to it or diſſent from it; for Words, of which we do not underſtand the Signification, are the ſame to us as if they had no Signification at all. How much therefore more honeſt and prudent would it be to own, at firſt, our Ignorance concerning certain abſtruſe Speculations, than to form

form Propoſitions about them, pretend to define and explain them, and then confeſs that we do not underſtand our own Definitions and Explanations; and call out Hereſy and Atheiſm, when we are deſired to ſpeak intelligibly, and tell what we mean?

But to the Proofs from Scripture: *John* iii. 8. ſays, *He that believeth in him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already.* And ver. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting Life; and he that believeth not on the Son, ſhall not ſee Life.* And chap. vi. 40. *Every one who ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may live eternally.* And ver. 51. *I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any Man eat of this, he ſhall live for ever.* And *Acts* x. 43. *To him all the Prophets bear Witneſs, that through his Name, whoever ſhall believe in him, ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins.* And chap. xvi. 31. *And they ſaid, Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy Houſe.* And *Rom.* chap. x. 9. *If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy Mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine Heart, that God hath raiſed him from the Dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* 1ſt Epiſtle of *John*, chap. iv. 2, 3, and 15. and chap. v. ver. 1. to the ſame Purpoſe.

Theſe, with many more plain and direct Texts, make only this Article neceſſary to be believed, and ſuperſede all others. Nor is this required of us, barely becauſe it is

true, or to gain adventitious Honour to the Deity, who wants not the Applauſe of poor mortal Men; for ſuch Belief could ſignify nothing: But it was required of us to obtain Obedience to his Commands, and direct our Practice, to promote virtuous Actions, and the Principles which produce them. *John*, chap. v. ver. 24. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting Life.* And chap. viii. ver. 31. *Jeſus ſaid to thoſe* Jews *which believed in him, if ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Diſciples indeed.* So that Faith in Chriſt is not enough, unleſs we obey his Word; or rather, we cannot be truly ſaid to believe in him, whilſt we reject his Commandments. 1ſt Epiſtle General of St. *John*, chap. ii. ver. 3, 4. *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments: He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Lyar, and the Truth is not in him. But whoſo keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

Let us therefore ſee what are thoſe Commands, in the Obſervance of which Chriſtianity conſiſts. It does not conſiſt in the Obſervance *of Days, nor Months, nor Time, nor Years*, Gal. iv. and 9. And Rom. xiv. 5. *One Man eſteemeth one Day above another, another Man eſteemeth every Day alike: Let every Man be fully perſuaded in his own Mind.*

It

It does not consist in positive Institutions, in Forms and Ceremonies. 1 *Cor.* chap. vii. ver. 19. *Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the Commandments of Christ.* And *Gal.* vi. ver. 15. *In Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision availeth any Thing, nor Uncircumsion, but a new Creature.* Gal. v. ver 6. to the same Purpose.

It does not consist in Meats nor Drinks, in Fish nor in Flesh. 1 *Cor.* chap. viii. ver. 8. *Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat, are we the better; nor if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest this Liberty of yours become a Stumbling-Block to them that are weak.* And *Rom.* xiv. 17. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat nor Drink; but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*

It consists not in long Prayers, nor in many Prayers. Mat. vi. 7. *When ye pray, use not vain Repetitions, as the Heathens do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like them; for the Father knoweth what Thing ye have need of before ye ask.* Indeed it seems plain to me from this Text, as well as from the Reason of the Thing, that Prayer it self becomes chiefly a Duty, as it raises our Minds, by a Contemplation of the Divine Wisdom, Power and Goodness, to an Acknowledgment of his repeated Bounties to Mankind; and as it disposes us to an Imitation of those high Perfections,

and to be merciful and beneficent to one another. For it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that we can direct the All-wiſe Being in the Diſpenſations of his Providence; or can flatter or perſuade him out of his eternal Decrees. If therefore any Texts in Scripture ſeem to carry a contrary Implication, I conceive they ought to be underſtood with the ſame Allowances as thoſe are, which ſpeak of God's Hands and Feet, and of his being ſubject to human Paſſions.

It does not conſiſt in Sacrifices performed in pompous Churches and magnificent Buildings, or in conſecrated Trinkets. *Acts* xvii. 24, 25. *God, that made the World, and all Things therein, ſeeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, neither is worſhipped with Mens Hands, as though he wanted any thing; ſeeing he giveth to all Life and Breath, and every Thing.* Acts vii. 48, 49, 50. *The moſt High dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands. Heaven is his Throne, and Earth is his Foot-ſtool; what Houſe will ye build to me, ſaith the Lord; or where is the Place of my Reſt? Hath not my Hand made all Things?*

His Being is univerſal, not confined to Churches, Chappels, Choirs, nor Altars; but his Preſence is every where alike, and not more immediately in one Place than another. *Acts* xvii. 27, 28, 29. *He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live,*

live, and move, and have our Being, as certain alſo of your own Poets have ſaid, for we are his Offſpring. For as much therefore as we are the Offſpring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto Gold or Silver, or Stone graven by Art or Man's Device.

The Almighty has no favourite Opinions, Sects and Nations. *Acts* x. 34, 35. *And* Peter *opened his Mouth and ſaid, Of a Truth, I perceive that God is no Reſpecter of Perſons; but in every Nation, he that feareth him and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted of him.* Rom. ii. 11. *There is no Reſpect of Perſons with God.* Coloſ. iii. 11. *There is neither* Greek, *nor* Jew, Circumciſion, *nor* Uncircumciſion, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond *nor* Free, *but Chriſt is all, and in all.* Gal. iii. 28. *There is neither* Jew *nor* Greek, *there is neither* Bond *nor* Free, *there is neither* Male *nor* Female, *for ye are all one in* Jeſus Chriſt.

How therefore ſhall we worſhip him? how know his Will? St. *John* tells us, *Chap.* vii. 16, 17. *If any Man will do God's Will, he will know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God or not:* That is as much as to ſay, "Make uſe of the Judgment which God has "given you; and ſee whether the Doctrine "taught you, be worthy of an Omnipotent "Author; ſee whether it teaches Peace and "Love to your Neighbour, Compaſſion to

" all in Diſtreſs, Forbearance of Injuries,
" Humanity and Indulgence to all who diſ-
" fer from you, Duty to Parents, Submiſ-
" ſion and Obedience to the Laws of your
" Country, and Charitableneſs and Benevo-
" lence to all Mankind, and even to the
" Brute Creation; then you may be ſure
" ſuch Doctrine comes from God. But if it
" breaths forth Revenge, and implacable
" Hatred; if it raiſes Mobs, Civil Wars,
" and Perſecutions, for trifling Opinions; if
" it has for its End Ambition and worldly
" Pride, and overturns every thing Sacred
" and Civil, which ſtands in its Way; if it
" encourages the worſt Men, and oppreſſes
" the beſt; if it diſcourages Induſtry, and
" depopulates Nations; then there are plain
" Traces of Satan's, or the *Popiſh* Prieſt's
" Foot in it, and ſuch a Religion can never
" come from God.

When you have made this your beſt Uſe of the Faculties God has given you, your Endeavours will certainly be accepted by him; and you will meet all the Reward which attends the judging right, ſince you have done all in your Power to do ſo: For God puts upon no Man the *Ægyptian* Task of making Bricks without Straw; nor requires any thing which you cannot perform. *Rom.* chap. ii. ver. 10, 11. *Glory, Honour, and Peace, to every Man who worketh Good; to the* Jew *firſt, and then to the* Gentile; *for*

as many as have ſinned without Law, ſhall be puniſhed without Law: and thoſe that have ſinned in the Law, ſhall periſh by the Law. And, ver. 14, 15. *For when the* Gentiles, *which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things of the Law, they are a Law unto themſelves: Which ſheweth the Work of the Law written in their Hearts; their Conſcience alſo bearing them Witneſs, and their Thoughts the mean while accuſing or elſe excuſing one another.*

So that the *Gentiles* themſelves are to be judged by their Sincerity, and not condemned for involuntary Errors. *Rom.* xiv. 10, 11, 12, 13. *Why doſt thou judge thy Brother? As I live, ſaith the Lord, every Knee ſhall bow to me, and every Tongue ſhall confeſs to God; ſo then every one of us ſhall give an Account to God. Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more* And, ver. 22. we are told who will be judged to Happineſs; *Happy is he who condemneth not himſelf in that Thing which he alloweth.* 1ſt Epiſtle General of St. *John*, chap. iii. ver. 21. *Beloved, if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God.*

Cornelius, tho' a Heathen, is commended in *Acts* the xth, ver. 2. as *a devout Man, and one that feared God with all his Houſe, which gave much Alms to the People, and prayed to God always:* And *Lydia*, a Seller of Purple, tho' neither a *Jew* nor a *Chriſtian*, is ſaid to

be a *Worſhipper of God*, and one *whoſe Heart God had open'd*, before ſhe heard the Preaching of *Paul*, Acts xvi. 14.

This comprehenſive Charity, this Spirit of publick Beneficence, runs every where through the New Teſtament; nor can I find any Precept there given, but what is manifeſtly advantageous to Mankind, conducing to their preſent Happineſs, and deducible from eternal Reaſon, and the Reſult of it. *Mat.* xxii. 35, to 39. *A Lawyer ask'd of our Saviour, which is the great Commandment of the Law? And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the firſt and great Commandment: And the ſecond is like unto it; Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf. Upon theſe Two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*

Another Lawyer asks of him, (*Luke* x. 25.) *What ſhall I do to obtain eternal Life? And he ſaid unto him, What is written in the Law? how readeſt thou? And he ſaid, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Soul, and all thy Strength, and all thy Mind; and thy Neighbour as thy ſelf. And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt anſwered right: Do this and thou ſhalt live.* And chap. xviii. ver. 18, and 20, &c. *A certain Ruler ask'd him, ſaying, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal Life? And Jeſus ſaid, Thou knoweſt the Com-*

mand-

mandments: Do not commit Adultery, do not kill, do not ſteal, do not bear falſe Witneſs; honour thy Father and thy Mother. He indeed adds afterwards another Condition, which was *to ſell all he had and give it to the Poor*; which the Ruler could not bring himſelf to comply with; tho' I dare ſay he would have promiſed to have believed Creeds by the Dozen, if thoſe would have done him any ſervice. But I cannot find that, in all Scripture, our Saviour does impoſe upon us the Belief of one Modern Creed, or of any other but that *He was the Meſſiah.*

Chap. xviii. ver. 8. Zaccheus, *a Publican, ſaith unto the Lord, half of my Goods I give unto the Poor; and if I have taken any thing from any Man by falſe Accuſation, I reſtore him four fold: And Jeſus ſaid unto him, This Day is Salvation come unto thy Houſe*; without asking him one Queſtion about his Faith.

Rom. xiii. 8, 9. *Owe no Man any thing but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law: For this, Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery, thou ſhalt not kill, thou ſhalt not ſteal, thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs, thou ſhalt not covet; and if there is any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* The ſame Doctrine, in another Place, is thus ſhortly deſcribed; *By this all Men ſhall know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* So that the

Love

Love of God, and of our Neighbour, is the Whole Duty of a Chriſtian. The firſt implies the Worſhip of God, or rather is the true and very Worſhip of God *in Spirit and in Truth*; and the latter comprehends all the Moral and Social Virtues. 1ſt Epiſtle of *John*, chap. iv. ver. 7, 8. *Beloved, let us love one another, for Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love.* Ver. 16. *God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* And, chap. v. ver. 3. St. *John* defines what the Love of God is; namely, *For this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.*

This appears ſtill more evident, when we examine for what Virtues and Crimes Men will be rewarded, and puniſhed, eternally. Matth. Chap. xxv. 31. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his Glory, and before him ſhall be gather'd all Nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them from one another, as the Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats; and he ſhall ſet the Sheep on the Right Hand, and the Goats on the Left. Then ſhall the King ſay to them on the Right Hand, Come, ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World: for I was hungry, and ye gave me*

Meat;

Meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; in Priſon, and ye came unto me. Then ſhall he ſay alſo to them on the Left Hand, Depart from me, ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: for I was hungred, and ye gave me no Meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; ſick and in Priſon, and ye viſited me not.

But the Want of Faith is here objected to no Man: No one is rewarded, or puniſhed, for believing, or not believing, in Tranſubſtantiation, Conſubſtantiation, or the Real Preſence; in Predeſtination or Free-will; or for having, or not having, right or wrong Conceptions of the Trinity in Unity, the Incarnation, Hypoſtatick Union, infinite Satisfaction, *&c.* Nor is the Divine Right of Biſhops, Presbyters, and Tithes, once mention'd. Not a Word about Obedience to Spiritual Sovereigns, and Eccleſiaſtical Princes, or about our receiving the Sacraments from a Regular Prieſt, deſcended in a right Line from the Apoſtles.

Such a Religion as this, which I have deſcribed, is agreeable to the Divine Juſtice; which does not puniſh any Man for ſpeculative Opinions, and eſpecially for Opinions which neither do Good nor Hurt to any

any one, and for Opinions which no one can help. "This is a Religion every way "worthy of its eternal Author; and we "may know *by the Doctrine, that it comes* "*from God.* It is a Religion for Men of "Senſe, for Philoſophers, for honeſt Men; "and comprehenſible too by the meaneſt "Vulgar, without a Guide; a Religion of "Reaſon, free from the blind Mazes and "ſtudied Intricacies of Popiſh Prieſts, and "beneficial to Society at firſt View. It "deſpiſes apiſh Geſtures, and external Buf-"foonery; and effectually prevents, and "puts an End to, all inhumane Fierceneſs "and holy Squabbles, ever occaſioned by "the ſelfiſh Religions of corrupt Prieſts. "It leaves not unhappy Men in perpe-"tual Doubts and Anxieties, nor toſſes and "tumbles them, for Relief, out of one Su-"perſtition into another; but eſteems them "all alike.

"In ſhort, this is a Religion, which e-"very wiſe and honeſt Man would wiſh to "be Religion; a Religion of Charity, the "*Religion* of JESUS; and this is The "INDEPENDENT WHIG's *Religion.*

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THE

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